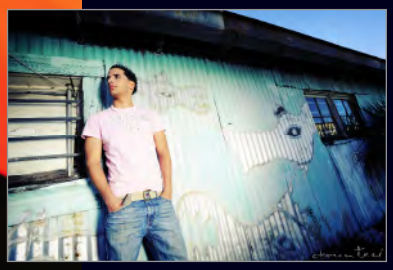
VISIT…

Tucci and Usmani's

The BUSINESS of PHOTOGRAPHY



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Amherst Media®
PUBLISHER OF PHOTOGRAPHY BOOKS

Check out Amherst Media's blogs at: http://portrait-photographer.blogspot.com/
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Published by:
Amherst Media, Inc.
P.O. Box 586
Buffalo, N.Y. 14226
Fax: 716-874-4508
www.AmherstMedia.com

Publisher: Craig Alesse
Senior Editor/Production Manager: Michelle Perkins
Assistant Editor: Barbara A. Lynch-Johnt
Editorial assistance provided by Sally Jarzab and John S. Loder.

ISBN-13: 978-1-58428-997-5
Library of Congress Control Number: 2009939765

Printed in Korea.
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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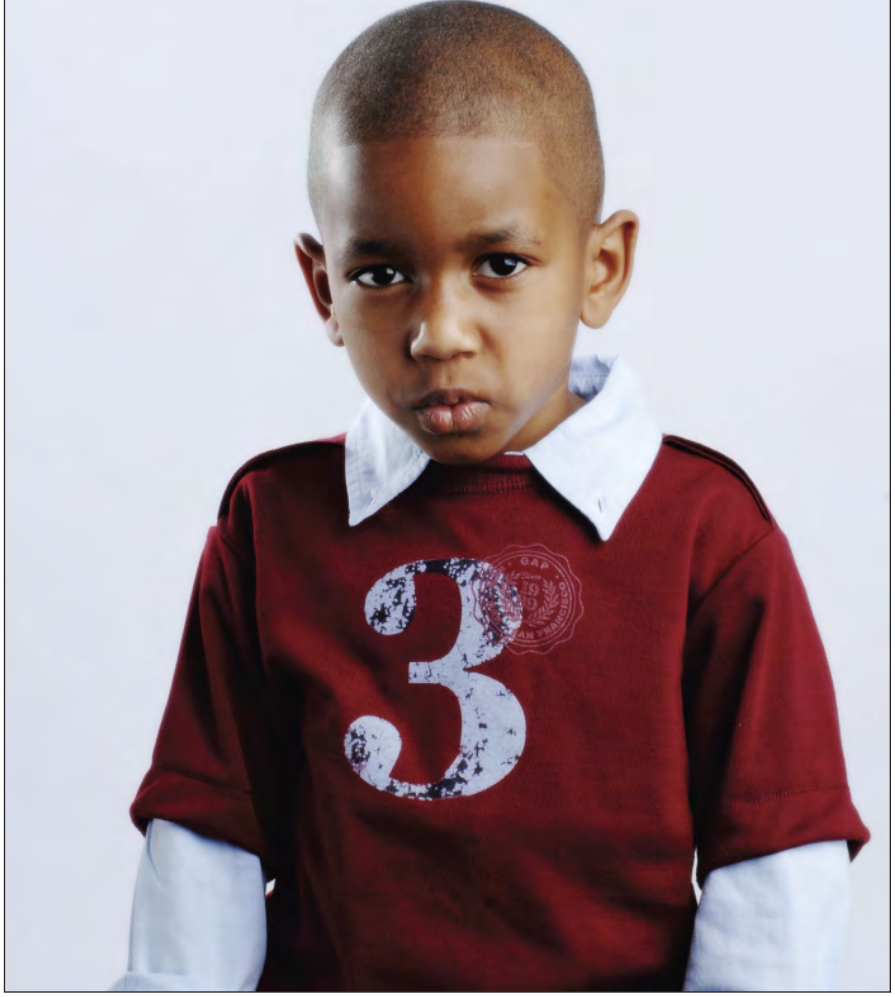
INTRODUCTION

So you've decided to be a photographer. You studied photography in college or went to art school, and you've come to the point of deciding that it's time to hang out your shingle. Or maybe you're self-taught and everyone loves your work and says, "Hey, you could make a living at this!" Either way, you've decided to make a go at being a true professional photographer. Good for you! It's an exciting field, and nothing is more rewarding than being your own boss.

Be advised, though: like anything in life, being an entrepreneur has its pros and cons. It takes a certain personality to pull this off. Many of us are naturally leaders or followers, and the sheep will not stay in business long. Year after year, photography businesses open and close. It is easy to be vanquished by the many pitfalls that you'll encounter. This book is a road map that will help you to navigate past the perils you'll encounter on your road to success.

A BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY

I was trained at Walt Disney World, and while I was employed there, my core business values were instilled in me. Essentially, everything is based on the Golden Rule, which dictates that we should treat people the way that we would like to be treated. Keep this in mind every time you deal with your clients, and you'll reap the rewards of happier clients and repeat business. Keep this in mind as you read through the book and as you start work every day.



By now, you've honed your photography skills and developed an amazing style. If you want to succeed in this business, you must now master another art—one they didn't teach you in school: the art of business.

I personally started my career working for Walt Disney World. I was employed there for ten years and was able to concentrate my efforts on my photography. When I opened my own place in 2000, I had to put my photography on hold and embrace Business 101. I had to turn my attention toward accounting, marketing, business plans, and bottom lines. I made several errors along the way. The purpose of this book is to help prevent you from making some of the same mistakes.

1. BUILDING A FOUNDATION

All too often, photographers start out working "under the table." This may work for a while, but it is short sighted and can be costly in the end. At some point, you'll want to spread your entrepreneurial wings and open your own business. Of course, you'll want to follow some basic guidelines and rules.

DO IT BY THE BOOK

Getting a License. One of the first steps you'll need to take when starting up your business is to obtain a license.

The licensing requirements vary from one region to the next, and your best bet to determining what you'll need to do before conducting business in your neck of the woods is to visit www.occupationallicense.com. You'll find information about incorporating your business on this site as well.

ONE OF THE FIRST STEPS YOU'LL NEED TO TAKE WHEN STARTING UP YOUR BUSINESS IS TO OBTAIN A LICENSE.

We live in downtown Orlando, Florida. In downtown Orlando, the first thing you need to do is to obtain occupational licenses. If you are within city limits, as we are, you will need both city and county licenses. These are easily obtained. The city license runs about $137 a year, and the county one is around $37. Occupational licenses are relatively easy to obtain and must be renewed annually.

CHARTING THE COURSE

It is best to have realistic expectations when you are going into business. Most businesses of any kind generally do not make money in the first three years.

Getting a Sales Tax ID. The next step is to obtain a sales tax ID. In Florida, tax IDs are regulated by the Florida Department of Revenue. The sales tax ID is also relatively easy to obtain; however, one must educate oneself on the proper way to fill out the forms. You will be required to pay your sales tax monthly or quarterly. Be advised that once you are in the system, you must file your taxes by the appropriate due dates. Penalties for failure to do so are severe and add up quickly. There is not much leniency for ignorance of the system.

The department offers classes on how to fill out the paperwork. It is not rocket science, but if you have never done it before, it can be a little daunting. If you live in Florida, you can go to www.myflorida.com/dor, log everything you made, and pay your taxes online.

HIRE AN ACCOUNTANT

Once you've obtained the necessary licensing and have gotten a tax ID, you'll want to find a good accountant. A good accountant is a partner for your business. They can help you set up an ideal infrastructure to build upon.

THE FINANCIALS

When I started in 2000, I began with one checking account and one business credit card. The checking account was earmarked only for the business. There were no personal transactions for either the credit card or checking account.

All monies received are deposited into the checking account, and all bills are paid with the checking account. This is a very rudimentary system and will serve only to get you started. The next step is to add a credit card that is only for the business. It does not have to be a business credit card per se. It just has to be used only for the business. Since it is unrealistic to pay all bills with checks these days, this is the next logical step. Once you have gotten to this point, your next step will be to get QuickBooks or some other accounting software. Successware and Studio Cloud (www.studiocloud.com) are also popular accounting software for photographers. We use QuickBooks, however.

Incorporation. Also, at this time, you may want to think about incorporating. Incorporating insulates you from lawsuits and also reduces your income tax liability. Sole proprietorships pay sales taxes and up to 30 percent in income tax. You can set up a corporation reasonably online (just Google how to set up a corporation) or have your new accountant walk you through it. Once you do have your incorporation set up, be sure not to forget the annual fee of $150 that is due by April 1, as it becomes $400 after that date.

WHAT'S IT WORTH?

As artists, we sometimes feel weird about putting a price tag on what we do. To continue this journey, though, you must overcome this. Getting a handle on the financial overview of your business will help you ensure your prices help you to reach all of your profit goals.

Methods of Payment. You may decide to accept credit cards. Merchant service accounts are easy to set up. Shop around online for the lowest fees. We use www.eprocessing.com. Their rates are competitive and, best of all, we don't need a credit card machine. Everything is input right into their online terminal, which you can access from anywhere that you have Internet access. This comes in handy when we are on the road selling books, posing guides, or simply entering a retainer on the road.

Like most things in life, there are pros and cons to accepting credit cards. On the upside, they make it easier for your clients to spend their money. A downside is that credit card charges can be disputed up to three years after the charge. Credit card companies tend to favor the consumer in these disputes, and a chargeback will put a damper on your day.

There are also new and innovative ways to make it easier for your clients to afford your services and products—or more of them. Bridal registries can be set up, and guests can contribute to the bride and groom's photography budget. Some studios also offer financing. This is called third-party financing, and if the client defaults, you are still paid in full. Obviously, your client won't be happy to have to pay for products they never receive, so taking advantage of this option may mean opening up a can of worms. Personally, I have no interest in attracting clients who can't afford or don't value my services. That said, it is an option, and like every other option in the business world, you must find the solutions that work best for you.

Building a solid economic infrastructure in the beginning is ideal. Do not go in with a house of cards. If you want to succeed, do your homework. Check with your local municipalities and follow the rules. Breaking the rules can lead to fines, penalties, and even being forced out of business. Sales tax must be charged to your clients for everything. If you provide anything tangible, such as digital files, proofs, or albums, you must charge sales tax. There is one exception to this rule: if you are providing images to someone who will be selling them to a third party, the seller will charge the buyer tax, and you'll be off the hook.

Partner Up. A good accountant is basically a good partner for your business. As a small business owner, you will want to surround yourself with great partners. We will emphasize the importance of this throughout this book.

Studio Management Systems (SMS), a service provided by Professional Photographers of America (PPA), is designed to help photographers become more efficient businesspeople. For an enrollment fee, the group will provide accounting services and will help you develop proper pricing strategies, product lines, and business plans. In the section that follows, the group's CFO, Scott Kurkian, graciously contributes his thoughts on what a photographer needs to know about business finances.

MAKING A PLAN

Whether you're opening a new business or polishing up an existing one, you will need to write a business plan. The Small Business Association (www.sba.com) has a vast amount of information on this topic and also provides information about business loan opportunities.

SCOTT KURKIAN: WHAT EVERY PHOTOGRAPHER NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT BUSINESS FINANCES

When operating a photography business, there is a lot more to know than just how to take great pictures. Whether you are just starting a business or have been working at it for a number of years, here are some of the things that will help you maximize the money that's left in your pocket at the end of the day.

Income Taxes. When getting started, you'll need to legally establish your business. There are four business formats that are appropriate for small businesses. These include:

- Sole proprietorship
- C corporation
- S corporation
- Limited liability company (LLC)

The factors that determine what is best for your photography business are:

- How much profit (or loss) your business generates
- How much wealth you have in the form of personal assets
- What state you operate in

For businesses just starting up, a sole proprietorship is generally adequate. There are situations, however, when an LLC makes more sense:

- You have already acquired a substantial amount of personal wealth that you want to keep legally separated from the business.
- You are going into business with a partner (not a spouse).

A small business should never operate as a C corporation. The IRS has given small businesses (companies having revenues under $10,000,000) an option with many tax advantages: the S corporation. Becoming an S corporation is simply the same legal process as incorporating a C corporation, with the additional step of filing a one-page form with the IRS that elects "S" status. Here are the things you need to know about becoming an S corporation:

- You should not consider becoming an S corporation until your business is producing a net taxable income of at least $30,000. That is when tax savings kick in that will more than offset the cost and paperwork requirements of incorporation and filing corporate tax returns.
- If you have already operated your company as an LLC prior to reaching the $30,000 taxable income level, you do not need to incorporate in order to enjoy the tax benefits of being an S corporation. As an LLC, you can simply elect to file your taxes as an S corporation without going through the cost and paperwork that incorporating requires. You will have the additional annual cost of the preparation of an S corporation tax return.

The state you operate in can also affect what type of entity your business should be. Some states have high annual LLC fees, some do not recognize S corporations and have high corporate taxes, while some have either no corporate income taxes or no personal income taxes.

There are a number of other factors that can dramatically affect the amount of taxes you pay the government. Some of the issues that need to be handled properly to minimize your tax burden are:

- Equipment depreciation and Section 179 deductions
- Automobile depreciation
- Health insurance deductions
- Home office deductions
- Owner's salary vs. distributions for S corporation filers

- Tax planning throughout the year
- Retirement planning and deductions

Sales and Employment Taxes. Two other areas of taxation that are crucial to operating a successful business are sales tax and employment tax. These are both taxes that you collect from others on behalf of the IRS or your local and state governments, and the penalties for not handling these properly are more severe than those you'd face for mishandling your personal income taxes. This is a very serious responsibility for a small business, and not complying with government requirements can cost you a great deal of time, money, and grief.

Sales Taxes. Most state and local governments that have a sales tax require photographers to collect sales tax on everything they sell, including session fees. If anyone, whether it is another photographer, someone from the local sales tax office, or even a CPA, tells you that you do not have to collect sales taxes on session fees because they constitute a service, you can be sure that they do not understand how photographers are taxed. Most government sales tax agencies view the session as a part of the manufacturing process of the final product you deliver, and not as a separate service you are providing. There are some states where this is not the case (e.g., Illinois), and some states do not collect sales tax (e.g., Delaware); outside of those states, you need to check with a local CPA to make sure that you are handling sales tax collection and payment correctly.

Employment Taxes. These are the taxes you withhold from employees' paychecks, including your own if you are taxed as an S-Corporation and pay yourself a salary. Like sales taxes, these must be collected and remitted to the federal and state governments properly or they can become a major source of grief for you as a small-business owner, or worse. Penalties are very severe when it comes to these taxes. Although you may wear many hats as a small-business owner, do not let payroll processing and administration be one of them! You should outsource your payroll, and this can be done by payroll companies that provide this service very inexpensively, companies such as ADP and Paychex. There are also extensive, complex IRS rules about who can be paid as a subcontractor versus who should be put on payroll as an employee. Most of the time, any person paid on a regular basis for doing work that you control should be compensated as an employee. You should consult with your local CPA to make sure you classify workers properly.

We highly recommend you work with a qualified CPA to help you make the best tax decisions for your business. PPA offers members a free webinar on taxes on its web site (www.ppa.com) and also offers tax services through a CPA firm that specializes in working with photographers. You can contact PPA for information on these services at (800) 339-5451 ext. 244.

Financial Management. Even more so than tax knowledge and planning, proper financial management is one of the most important keys to operating a profitable photography business. Unfortunately, this is probably the weakest part of most photographers' business talents. If anything, photographers may look at a financial report from their CPA once in a great while, or they might have a QuickBooks accounting file which they print a report from now and then, or maybe just look at the same reports all the time, like a sales report or customer balance report. This is not sufficient.

Managerial accounting tells you where your income came from, and why you spent it.

Most of what photographers will ever see from their accountant or QuickBooks is tax-based accounting, which may be adequate for preparing accurate tax returns, but will never give a business owner the information they need to manage their business more effectively on a daily basis. What photographers need to learn about and use in their business management duties is something called managerial accounting. Managerial accounting, as opposed to tax-based accounting, is the process of properly measuring the relevant financial information in your business and using that to help you make better business decisions. Here are some aspects to managerial accounting:

- While tax-based financial information tells you how much income you brought in, and what you spent it on, managerial accounting tells you where your income came from, and why you spent it. This is important information when

determining why your business is or is not performing financially the way you want it to.

- Managerial accounting is made up of two aspects—collecting accurate financial information about your business, and then once you have that, understanding what that information is telling you. This underlies the need for accurate, timely bookkeeping for anyone who is running a serious photography business. Without this foundation of accurate raw data, anything else that you will read going forward is irrelevant.
- Although some photographers have gone a long way building successful businesses purely on talent and gut instinct, using the right tools helps business owners squeeze the most out of that natural ability. Managerial accounting is an important tool, one that has turned many average businesspeople into good businesspeople, and many good businesspeople into great businesspeople. Just like a naturally gifted athlete that needs to train and get the proper nutrition to take full advantage of their talent, so a photographer needs to use the tool of managerial accounting to ensure the maximization of profits and success in their business.

Managerial accounting helps a photography business do the following things:

- Determine past financial results in a profit and loss statement format recommended by PPA (Professional Photographers of America) for all portrait and wedding photographers. A discussion of the components of a managerial profit and loss statement are found in the next section.
- Compare the financial results prepared above to the PPA benchmark survey. This is the first financial summary of wedding and portrait photography businesses ever produced for this industry and allows you, as a photography business owner, to compare how your business has performed financially to the average and top-performing businesses in the industry. This is an invaluable tool and is available for free to PPA members at www.ppa.com.
- Review your photography business's Cost of Goods Sold (COGS) percentage and determine if it is in line with the recommended benchmarks. COGS that is too high as a percentage of sales is one of the most common problems found when analyzing a photography business. This can mean that your prices are too low, your average sales are too low, what you are paying to your vendors is too high, your workflow, including what you pay your production workers, is inefficient, or some combination of the above. Determining your true COGS percentage can be the first step toward fixing the problems that many photographers share in producing and delivering their work in an unprofitable manner.
- Break your sales into product lines (e.g., weddings, studio portraits, location portraits, seniors, etc.), and then determine your sales averages by product line. This will help you determine how much gross income you generate every time you photograph. This is important to help analyze where your income is coming from compared to the amount of time you are spending shooting each product line. A low sales average can often indicate why a photographer seems to be working so hard with little left in their bank account at the end of the day to show for it.
- Review your marketing efforts. Determine where calls are coming from and what percentage you are converting into consultations/clients. Begin looking beyond simply marketing your business and begin "branding" yourself. Don't just do the things your clients and potential clients expect you to do; go beyond their expectations, give them a reason to never go anywhere else for their photography. Repeat customers are always easier to get than new customers. Work hard on building your relationship skills, if that is not one of your natural gifts. Most, if not all, of the financially successful photographers in this industry have great interpersonal skills and know how to make customers feel really great about working with them.
- Create a financial plan for the coming year. This is probably the most important thing you can do

for your business. It's been said, "Plans never work, but planning is everything." The process a business owner undertakes to think through their entire business for the coming year, before it happens, can have a dramatic impact on the chances for financial success. Building a financial plan is one of the more challenging things for most photographers, but it is well worth the time and effort. If you don't know where to start, turn to one of the many industry resources that make this process easier to accomplish. PPA's Studio Management Services builds financial plans with studios every day to help them get control over where their businesses are going.

A managerial accounting profit and loss statement is made up of four primary components:

- Revenues (product lines)
- Cost of goods sold
- General expenses
- Owner's compensation plus net profits

Revenues (Product Lines). The first section of any profit and loss statement is revenues, and a wedding/portrait photographer should break down their revenues by product lines. Product lines are who you sell to (e.g., wedding clients, high school seniors, children's studio portraits, location family portraits, etc.); products are what you sell to your customers (e.g., 8x10s, wall portraits, albums, frames, etc.). A managerial financial statement should ideally show how much income a photographer brought in from each product line, as well as the number of sessions they performed for each product line. This should also allow for the easy calculation of each product line's sales average, which is a critical piece of information when analyzing your business.

Cost of Goods Sold (COGS). These are all the direct costs that go into producing and delivering the products that you sell. These include lab expenses, frame and album costs, production labor (assistants, file editors/retouchers, album design, etc.) but not any pay to the owner, shipping costs to the client, credit card merchant fees, etc. A complete list is available at www.ppa.com. Cost of goods sold, as a percentage of sales, is one of the most important financial indicators when analyzing the financial profitability of a portrait and/or wedding photography business. PPA's benchmark survey recommends a COGS of up to 25 percent for retail studios and up to 35 percent for home-based businesses.

General Expenses. These are the costs that are not directly tied to sales but are necessary to operate the business on a daily basis. The six categories are:

1. Owner's compensation
2. Employee expenses (nonproduction)
3. Overhead costs
4. Marketing
5. Administrative costs
6. Depreciation (capital expenditures)

PPA's benchmark survey recommends that general expenses should cost up to 40 percent of sales for retail studios and up to 30 percent for home-based businesses. For more information on what types of expenses go under each of these categories, go to the Studio Management Services section of www.ppa.com.

Owner's Compensation Plus Net Profits. The truest measure of how a photography business has performed financially is its bottom line or, more specifically, the owner's compensation plus the net income produced by the business. PPA's benchmark survey has determined that a photography business is considered financially successful when it reaches an owner's compensation plus net income percentage equal to 35 percent of sales. That means that of every dollar that comes into the business, 35 cents goes to the owner in the form of salary, draws, health and life insurance, pension contributions, personal taxes, etc.

2. EQUIPMENT EXPENDITURES

ESSENTIAL CAMERA EQUIPMENT

Burgeoning photographers should be *very* frugal when they are setting up shop. In our industry, cameras and computers become obsolete after about two years, and unfortunately, in order to stay competitive, we must purchase the latest, greatest equipment. That was not the case even ten years ago, when a Hasselblad 500CM or 501C would last ten years plus. But, alas, we are in the new millennium, and the paintbrushes we use are always getting better and better. The point is to spend your money wisely. Do your research, check online, talk to colleagues, and even go into your local camera store and try any models you are interested in before you commit to buying one.

Professional Nikon users can join Nikon Professional Services or NPS. As an NPS member, you can borrow equipment for free for up to ten days. This gives you an opportunity to try out a piece of equipment you're considering purchasing or to access a specialty piece of equipment that you may need only once. Canon has Canon Professional Services, a program with similar benefits.

One of the easiest ways for first-time business owners to fail is by overspending. However, I don't advise cutting corners where it counts just to save a few bucks. Your camera system and computer will be your lifeblood, and they must be a good fit. Case in point: I purchased

a 15-inch MacBook Pro laptop. Every time I use it, I think to myself, I could not live without this. Yes, it was expensive, but it was worth every penny.

My best advice is to set up shop in your home when starting out. Get yourself two professional DSLR bodies, a few lenses (24–70mm f/2.8, 70–200mm f/2.8, 50mm f/1.4, and a fish-eye lens), two flashes, and a 52-inch silver/white reflector. Get yourself a Lowepro roller bag. In my opinion, this is the bare minimum of equipment you'll need to be a professional photographer.

Like a good scout, you'll want to be prepared for every shoot. Because equipment can break down in the middle of a shoot, you'll want to do whatever you can to ensure you have a backup system on hand. If you drop your 24–70mm lens, you can likely get by with your 50mm lens. If your camera meets an untimely end, you can rely on the second body that I mentioned above as a requirement.

COMPUTERS

If you are just starting out, you can do well with just one supercomputer, be it PC or Mac. The computer will need to have a top-of-the-line processor, video card, and as much RAM as possible (or as much as you can afford). Current Mac Pro models (the Mac desktop line) can accommodate up to 32GB of RAM. The Mac Pro we are currently using has 8GB of RAM. It does an adequate job but, again, for our business, the more RAM the better.

IF YOU ARE JUST STARTING OUT, YOU CAN DO WELL WITH JUST ONE SUPERCOMPUTER, BE IT PC OR MAC.

RAM can be expensive when purchasing a new computer, so consider purchasing it from a third-party vendor (e.g., www.crucial.com). You must just make sure that the new system has empty memory slots. The vendor can walk you through the installation process, which is really pretty simple. (The main concern is that you discharge any static on your person before installing the memory.)

At our studio, we use both platforms. We tend to use PCs for administration and accounting work and Macs for imaging work. While PCs can probably do all that a Mac can do, the Spyware virus programs slow down the system greatly—and that can be very frustrating. The Macs are pricier at the outset, but the PCs tend to need to be replaced more often, and

you've also got to consider the added cost of anti-virus and anti-Spyware software.

Networking. Networking is essential so that you can access all data by all machines. We like to keep our business administration and imaging work separate, so we use both computers. Networking all Macs or all PCs is relatively easy. Cross-platform networking (as we have done) is a little more challenging, but it is not that difficult, especially with newer Macs.

NETWORKING IS ESSENTIAL SO THAT YOU CAN ACCESS ALL DATA BY ALL MACHINES.

Included in our network are several external hard drives. We currently use 1TB LaCie and Iomega externals. They are "daisy chained" (connected together, from one to the next) and hooked up to our main Mac Pro.

Backing Up. Hard drives—both external and internal—do go bad. Sometimes you see the signs of the impending meltdown. For instance, if the drive begins to make odd noises, fails to mount, or begins to act buggy, you'd better be sure that you have everything on the drive backed up. Of course, sometimes a drive will go south without warning. In such cases, if you haven't backed up, you're in a whole lot of trouble. Your best bet, obviously, is to meticulously back up your files. Don't get lazy about this.

If and when your hard drive does die, you have a few options. First, there are many prosumer recovery programs on the market. LaCie recommends a $99 "data rescue" recovery program that will recover some lost data. If the drive is too far gone for the recovery software, you can turn to DriveSavers to do the job. This is a national company endorsed by PPA and NASA. There is no charge if they cannot recover the data. They usually can—but the service is not inexpensive.

A RAID system (a set of hard disks, usually mounted in a single enclosure, to which data is simultaneously written to reduce the risk of data loss should any one disk fail) can be used to ensure that your files are safe. We use a Drobo system. See the manufacturer's web site for more information on these products (www.drobo.com).

3. HOME STUDIOS AND COMMERCIAL SPACES

Both home studios and commercial spaces have charm and merit. In this chapter, we'll look at the pros and cons that each option offers. Keep in mind that, if you're just starting out, working out of your home will help you keep your costs as low as possible. While it's nice to have a flashy studio, the $3000- to $7000-per-month price tag can be a lot to swallow.

MY JOURNEY

I left Disney in 2000 and began booking weddings out of my home. It was located in a middle-class neighborhood where not everyone took proper care of their yards. Inside, my home was modest. There was a family room with a fireplace that served as my office and area I met my clients. It was cozy and effective.

In our business, first impressions are important. The neighborhood that my home was in was a little run down. My photography was tight, but the million-dollar clientele probably would be put off by the appearance of the neighborhood. Luckily for me, when I was working with a higher-budget client, I usually had to meet with their wedding coordinator at the coordinator's office.

Despite the house and the location, I managed to do pretty well that year. I booked thirty-seven weddings out of that house—mostly young couples who were looking for contemporary photography. Remember, it was 2000, and not all photography—especially wedding photography—was as cool as it is today.

In 2002, I set my sights on a grander house in a neighborhood overseen by the neighborhood's homeowner's association. It had a lot of curb appeal, and the great first impression it created was maintained as clients entered the home. It was 2700 square feet with a pool, granite countertops, and all the trimmings. In this new space, I felt more confident.

THE POSITIVE IMPACT MY NEW HOME HAD ON MY BUSINESS WAS A GREAT PERK.

My mortgage had increased from $1200 to $1800 a month, but my family's quality of life improved, and the positive impact my new home had on my business was a great perk. Things went fantastically well for two years. And then I got divorced. I walked out with my surfboards and camera gear and left everything else behind.

I landed in downtown Orlando in a 1285-square-foot loft-style condo with a very trendy NYC look that suited my image style. People liked to meet here, and the studio flourished.

DOWNLOAD THIS!

Download PPA's 2005 Financial Benchmark Survey (www.ppa.com), which provides some wonderful statistics that support the fact that photographers working out of their homes make more money than colleagues with retail spaces.

There are pros and cons to living and working in the same space. You are never late to work, but then, living at work can be a disadvantage. It also means that you always have to keep your place clean.

Eventually, I met Rosena, who is now my girlfriend, partner, and marketing guru. I also have a lovely daughter (now nine years old) who lives with us three days a week. Even though the condo worked well, there were some annoyances. Clients had to pay for parking in the garage, and we had to meet them to let them into the building for security reasons. Whenever we had a session, we had to move everything in the condo to set up our studio.

Come 2006, I was once again ready for a place to call my own. We found a huge diamond in the rough in the art district downtown. It was a storefront on a main drive through a corridor from downtown to the affluent Winter Park. The main room was a 30x40-foot open area with 11-foot ceilings. There were offices, a workshop, and a bathroom behind it. It took a lot of work, but we transformed it into a happening space.

Our goal was to diversify our business into weddings/portraits/anything you needed. Our rent was affordable for Orlando—it was $2000 a month for 2000 square feet. We worked hard to build the portrait end of the business. We had the studio for two years, and then things changed again.

In your career, if you want to survive, you will adapt and evolve. I was living in the condo still, and I longed for a yard. I hated driving up the parking garage several times daily, passing tourists with their Starbucks in hand, driving in the middle lane. My daughter didn't have a proper bedroom. Because we lived in a NYC-style loft, she had an

Welcome to Damon Tucci Studios

Damon Tucci Studios is a full service photography venue specializing in weddings and distinctive portraiture. Our 2000 square foot facility is located in the heart of downtown Orlando, conveniently just minutes from I-4.

For over 15 years Damon has provided creative photographic concepts, solutions and services to clients in Central Florida, nation-wide and abroad. His contemporary approach to photography blends stylized fashion and documentary techniques, resulting in emotional and interesting images.

Our state of the art studio features a 20'x30' shooting space used for bridal and engagement portraits, as well as a variety of commercial opportunities. Next to the shooting space, the image processing center houses three workstations with MAC computers and a large format printer.

In our custom viewing area we are pleased to offer our clients a private screening of their images as they relax and enjoy a bottle of fine wine. This one of a kind presentation affords clients with the opportunity to relive their wedding day while surrounded by friends and family. During the session we select images for their album and consider wall print and frame options.

For clients not able to come in, we are also happy to provide instant custom viewing service through the use of online capabilities on our website, www.damontuccistudios.com. Clients can approval their exclusively designed album layout in the comfort of their own home with just a few clicks of the mouse.

Our goal at *Damon Tucci Studios* is to provide discerning clientele with high quality images and an unsurpassed photography experience. We work diligently throughout every step of the process to exceed their service expectations while providing them with the most current products available.

To schedule a private tour of the studio, please contact Rosy at 407.835.7879 or rosy@damontucci.com.

1221 N. Mills Ave. Orlando, FL 32803 - 407.835.7879 - www.damontucci.com

alcove, a bed, and a Disney princess poster above it. And to cap it off, we'd done a Tauferesque dog photo shoot. Our shoot was designed to help a rescue organization called "Buddies for Life," and guess what? Rosena rescued us a buddy. His name was Zeke, and he was never going to be housebroken living on the fifth floor.

So, I found a great house. The problem was, I couldn't afford the studio, condo, *and* a new house. Where did I turn? Craigslist. I placed an ad to rent out my condo and sublet the studio, and within five days, I had rented both. Now we have a wonderful two-story house in College Park. We meet clients and shoot downstairs, and we live upstairs. Tyler has a room, Zeke has a yard, and I have a garden and garage. I even started making custom surfboards in the garage, but I digress.

I don't usually get lucky, but it just so happens that after I made the move to College Park, the great recession of 2009 really began affecting our market. I was happy I had effectively saved us more than $2500 a month. (The lease was $2000 and with sales tax, it came to $2130. Business Internet service was another $100, electric was $200, the alarm system was $500 a year, and insurance was $600 a year. It all adds up.)

The moral of the story is that if your work is up to snuff, you can work anywhere. Plenty of people meet at a place like Starbucks or Panera Bread or in their clients' homes. Yes, image is important, and a flashy studio is great, but ultimately, it is the work and the fulfillment of the job that the clients are paying for. Just make sure that the space is working for you and that you are not working for the space. When we had the studio, I would accept jobs that I would otherwise turn my nose up at. (Think, "Yes, ma'am your Dalmatian is having a birthday party. I will be right there.")

Eventually, I would like another commercial space, but right now, it just does not make sense. Many colleagues are sharing spaces with other

vendors (e.g., perhaps with a coordinator, florist, and an invitation company), which allows each of them to cut their expenses. The only pitfall is that you have to be wary of these alliances. If you are "in bed" with one coordinator, chances are the others will not send brides to a competitor's office. The same goes for floral companies. These landmines can be navigated, however, and shared spaces can make great economic sense.

Ultimately, you must make the right decision for you. Spend your money wisely and take it slow.

INSIDE THE STUDIO

As we can see, today's workspaces and meeting spaces are many and varied—from Starbucks to a full-blown studio and everything in between. If you want to set up a full-blown studio, you'll need to ensure that you have the following spaces in your studio.

Reception Desk/Seating Area. Your reception room should be comfortable and should feature some of your most current work. Consider adding albums, frames, and other add-ons, which may sell themselves while your clients wait for their portrait session. Be sure that this area is decorated

The Well-Conceived Studio

Professional photographer Allison Earnest offers some food for thought when it comes to planning your own studio space:

"Starting with new construction on your home studio? Be certain to double the number of electrical outlets and include a few on the ceiling for your studio lights.

Additionally, planning for the resale value of your home is essential: include electrical outlets for large screen TVs, plumbing for a wet bar, and computer/cable/phone outlets. Though you won't use most of these features, it will help any future owner to set up a family/recreation room should you choose to sell down the line."

in a manner that suits your photographic style and the feel you are trying to create in your marketing and client interactions. For example, if your studio's specialty is cutting-edge portraiture, then go for modern decor. If your style is more traditional, go with a classic look. Some photographers also offer light refreshments to help clients relax.

Dressing Room. Many clients arrive at the session with wardrobe changes. Provide a private area where they can change their outfits before, during, and after the session.

Camera Room. You'll need a shooting area of around 15x20 feet with 9-foot-plus ceilings. Be sure that the professional feel you've created in the rest of the studio doesn't come to an abrupt halt at the camera room door. Make sure the area is clean and well organized; it will help you look more professional in your clients' eyes.

Presentation Area. Ideally, you will also want a sales presentation area, or perhaps a dedicated presentation room. Personally, for the wedding business, I love the flat-screen TVs. We have a 52-inch Sony Bravia, and it is amazing. During our sales appointments, we run a compilation loop of our favorite images. The quality is amazing. One pitfall, however, is that the largest vertical we can show is 20x24 inches. For portrait studios, or anyone who is trying to sell large prints, the size limitations can be detrimental, so a high-quality projector may be a better bet.

Ron Nichols, president of PPA, entrepreneur, and owner of Ron Nichols Digital Learning Systems, is a national consultant on studio setup. In the following section, he offers his advice on setting up a presentation space.

Schedule Your Private Viewing Session Today.

Damon Tucci Studios is proud to offer our couples this exclusive service. This one of a kind presentation is centered on an evening with family, as you sit back and enjoy a private screening of your photos. This unique experience is already included in your package at no extra charge.

Simply pick an evening and invite up to four additional attendees. We recommend parents or anyone that might be offering input to your photo selection for your album or wall prints. We will have wine, refreshments and a few snacks, so plan to stay about three hours. It's just like going to the movies with you in the starring role.

We will start the evening with a photo slideshow to music and then examine our various album options. You will also have the opportunity to evaluate paper and frame choices for wall prints. Then, together we will view our studio picks on the 80" screen of about 350 images, to select for your album. This will be your opportunity to decide what you like and provide ideas for your custom layout.

In addition to the album photos, we will prepare a list of 15 images that are ideal for wall prints. You will be able to see the images in actual size and accurately judge what will be appropriate for your home.

To schedule your private viewing session, please contact Rosy at rosy@damontucci.com.

Thank you for including us in your special day.

RON NICHOLS: THE PRESENTATION ROOM

A presentation room is one of the most valuable pieces of real estate in your studio. It will give you a place to meet with your clients, display your images, and take orders—all in a relaxed environment.

When setting up a studio or remodeling an existing one, many studio owners don't adequately plan for the room's design. This is a huge mistake because big profits can be made in a well-designed room.

When you are allocating space for this room, allow as much space as you would if you were creating a living space for yourself (i.e., it should approximate the size of your clients' living rooms). In this room, we want to create warm, comfortable surroundings that look like a living room, where clients can see images properly displayed, in appropriate sizes. Some additional things to consider when you are designing your space are:

- Wall portraits should be displayed in appropriate areas.
- A digital projection system needs to be installed.
- A control console should be positioned so the operator can maintain eye contact with the client. Be certain that the console monitor is not visible to the client.
- You'll need to have a computer with dual-output video cards.
- Network communications should be hard-wired, not wireless.
- You should be able to project horizontal images up to 40x60 inches.
- A wall display showing sizes 8x10- to 20x24-inch prints should be included. Larger prints should be displayed individually.
- Have a high-quality sound system installed.
- The lighting should be dimmer-controlled. Having a separate lighting circuit with spotlighting for the images is a good idea as well.
- A small wet bar comes in handy for serving refreshments. An apartment-sized dishwasher is a good idea, too.

The whole idea is to have a room where the clients sit, just like at home, and view and their images on the screen. The goal is to have your client imagine sitting in their favorite chair and looking up to see a portrait of their family on their wall. Having the room the right size is important. We want to create a realistic viewing distance for the client so they can understand and see the portrait head-size. When you are sitting in your room, you want to be able to enjoy the expressions on your children's faces.

Projectors and Screens. You can project your images onto a projection screen or a white wall. There are many affordable drop-down screens that work from a wireless remote. With this type of screen, the mechanism can be concealed in the ceiling or hidden behind a decorative soffit. Another benefit is that the screen can be hidden away when not in use. If the screen is positioned 6 to 8 inches

The goal is to have your client imagine sitting in their favorite chair and looking up to see a portrait of their family on their wall.

in front of the wall, it can be dropped down over a wall portrait display when it's time for the presentation.

When ordering a screen (and a projector, for that matter), it's best to work with the standard 4:3 ratio formats rather than the newer wide-screen 16:9 ratios. Because we need to project both vertical and horizontal images, the 4:3 ratio gives more equality in sizing, without taking up a lot of extra projection room.

Once you decide on the location for your screen, position it above a piece of furniture (a sofa, sofa table, or love seat will do). Seeing the image above a piece of furniture allows the client to imagine the amount of space the print will take up once it is displayed in their home.

Selecting the right projector for your room will play heavily in the success of projection sales. You need a projector capable of presenting a high-quality image in mod-

erate light levels. You don't want to have to completely darken the room to show your images. It's important for the client to see the surroundings to make a well-informed decision. Look for a projector with a minimum of 2000 lumens. You'll want LCD rather than DLP technology. The LCD is better at showing subtle highlight and shadow detail. For resolution, a minimum of XGA (1024x768) is required.

As of this writing, you can plan to spend about $900 for a projector. You'll see lower-priced projectors in the "big box" warehouse stores, but chances are these will only lead to disappointment.

TV Presentations. Many people want to use a plasma or LCD HD/TV rather than a digital projector. The problem with the HD/TVs is that, because they are a wide-screen format, the vertical size is very limited. A 50-inch TV will only yield a 20x24-inch vertical or a 24x36-inch horizontal image. It's been proven that people tend to buy down a size from the maximum, so if you show your images on a TV, your clients will buy 20x24 and 16x20-inch prints. When you present your images via projection, your clients will buy more 30x40 and 24x30-inch prints.

Software. You'll need a software program to allow simple and creative presentations. ProSelect by time exposure.com is a great option. The software allows you to sort, edit, create, and manage slide shows and place orders. It also allows for accurate sizing of projected images. These images can be shown in custom frames that you load or from files provided by frame suppliers. The ProSelect Pro version also manages workflow and integrates with Adobe Photoshop. It even includes an album builder.

The actual sales and presentation process can be enjoyable and profitable. Start the presentation with refreshments and a fun and emotional image show. Next, let the client judge each image on its own merit. After you have a final selection of images, sell the wedding album first, then the wall and gift prints. For portrait sessions, concentrate on selling the wall portrait first by showing the images in actual sizes. After that, move on to gift portraits (5x7s, 8x10s, wallets, etc.) then last, the specialty products like composite image mats and portrait albums.

AFTER YOU HAVE A FINAL SELECTION OF IMAGES, SELL THE WEDDING ALBUM FIRST, THEN THE WALL AND GIFT PRINTS.

Making a well-organized presentation will give your customers the opportunity to make educated decisions and make you more money.

For more resources, visit www.ronnichols.com.

STUDIO SNAPSHOT: BRIAN ADAMS PHOTOGRAPHICS

Our colleague Brian Adams has a shared space in downtown Orlando. The bulk of the building is dedicated to Brian Adams Co. He offsets his expenses by renting out the second floor of his bungalow to several other wedding vendors. He describes his studio below. For more information, go to www.bapg.net.

My studio space is a juxtaposition of sorts, which is a lot like my photography. The building which houses my space is an eighty-five-year-old restored bungalow in the middle of downtown Orlando. While the outside has a classic, traditional feel, the inside has a very minimalist look. People have said that my photography is fresh and new but is classic enough to stand the test of time. My interior studio setup reflects the style of my wedding photography: clean, simple, modern, high-impact, and lots of emotion. When guests walk through the door of my studio, I want them to stop in their tracks when they see the five spot-lit 40x60 canvases on the walls. I chose each image for its emotional quality. One is sweet, one is fun, one is dramatic, one is romantic, etc. I invite my guests to walk around the space, past the fresh flowers, and into each room, before they settle onto the comfy sofa in my meeting room. Here, they are able to enjoy a cold beverage while they view my wedding slide show on a flat-screen TV and look through a variety of albums. They see my front office and my assistant, but what they don't see the "behind the scenes" areas, where I have six Mac workstations set up with an equal number of editors, as my other company, EditTeam, is based in the back half of my studio.

STUDIO SNAPSHOT: CURT LITTLECOTT'S NU VISIONS PHOTOGRAPHY/NV BAR

Another interesting case in point is local competitor, colleague, and entrepreneur Curt Littlecott of NuVisions Studio and NV Bar. In 2006, Curt bought a fabulous building in downtown Orlando. Buying versus renting is great if you can afford it. He has offset his expenses by turning his very trendy studio by day into a chic downtown nightclub after hours (he describes the space below). This type of ingenuity is important to stay the course in this business. To learn more about Curt, go to www.nuvisionphotography.com.

We designed our studio around our own shooting style, which tends to be dark and moody most of the time. We shoot in each area, using built-in lighting, to create an on-location look.

The first two floors of the studio are open to the public five nights a week as a wine bar/gallery, and only our invited clients are able to access our third floor and rooftop. This way, our best clients are made to feel special and are able to relax and socialize while being surrounded by our most recent work.

On the third Thursday of every month, we we host an opening that features highlights from that month's shoots. Additionally, we host various events such as fashion shows to increase exposure to our work. These events are our main form of advertising.

More than ever, I think it's important to maintain my relationship with my clients and to remind them to keep their portraits current. Making my studio double as a social space helps to get us the face time we need with our clients.

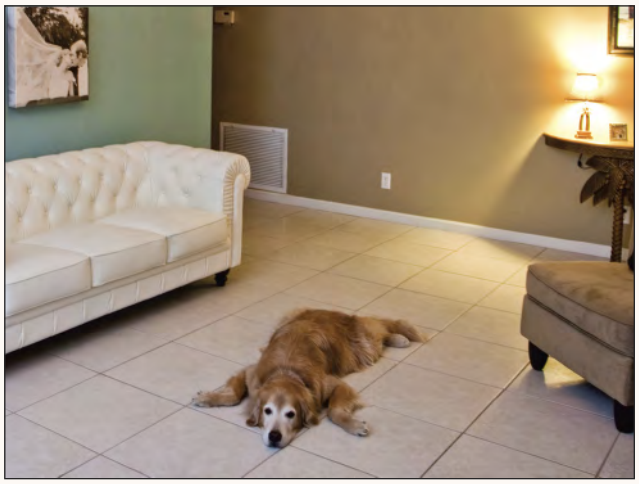
STUDIO SNAPSHOT: SARA KAUSS PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographer Sara Kauss of Jupiter, Florida, has designed a very chic, boutique-style selling space right in her home. When asked about her space, she says:

Being that wedding photography is the primary focus of my business, I found that I was using my rented studio space more for meetings than taking portraits. I decided to transform a portion of my home into a boutique-style meeting space. Antique-inspired furniture and a statement chandeleir make my new studio inviting and inspiring. While I use my home studio space mostly to hold meetings, I also have great colored walls and plenty of good light, which makes the space perfect for portrait sessions too.

Making the transition from the traditional studio space to my boutique-style home studio has proven to be a convenient, budget-friendly move that is well suited to my personality. My clients are introduced to my two golden retrievers and get a glimpse into my personal life, which allows them to get to know me better as their photographer. This puts my clients at ease and translates into fantastic photographs.

For more information on Sara's studio, visit her web site at www.sarakauss.com.



STUDIO SNAPSHOT: KEVIN ELWELL'S CREATIVE IMAGES PHOTOGRAPHY

Kevin is a second-generation photographer who began learning the business from an early age, learning the tricks of the trade from his father. He runs the business on his own now. Working with the client base the studio had generated over the years, Kevin has been able to focus the majority of his time and attention on the creative aspects of his work. He has taken the studio from a more traditional look to a more contemporary style of images.

For more information on Kevin and his studio, go to his web site at www.creativeimagesstudio.com.

Our studio was opened almost forty years ago by my parents, Tom and Cookie Elwell. We are a full-service studio but have found that photographing children is our real passion.

Our studio is located in a house that is over fifty-five years old. We renovated the home and added a camera room. Now, when our clients arrive for a session, they feel like they are visiting someone's home.

Our studio provides a comfortable and relaxing atmosphere for children to enjoy. We have always told our clients to tell their children they are going to our place to play, and not to mention "pictures." Everyone in our studio dresses casually—no suits and ties allowed. We've always tried to treat our clients like family and have maintained many of our "families" for generations.

Since taking the lead at our studio, I feel that I've truly redefined our style of portraiture. Having young children myself, I know what I like in their portraits, and I try to convey that style in what we do at the studio. Fun, fresh, casual, and natural are all words that can define the style of portraiture that we like.

We like our subject's pose to appear casual and natural. We use a minimum of props to let the children's personality show through, and I love working with available light. Every day, our clients get our undivided attention. We have two people working each session.

Our business has grown mainly from referrals with very little advertising, except for a small yellow page listing. Also, working with local retailers to swap referrals has proven successful. We have a great working relationship with two of the largest children's clothing boutiques in our area. I provide them with images for their stores and catalogs, and they send me lots of new clients. It's a win-win situation.

STUDIO SNAPSHOT: ALLISON EARNEST PHOTOGRAPHY

Allison Earnest runs a successful home studio in Colorado. She is the author of Sculpting with Light™, *published by Amherst Media. For more information, go to www.allisonearnestphotography.com.*

Back in the film days, if you mentioned you had a home studio, many people would not regard you as a bonafide professional photographer. Fast forward to the onset of digital photography. Many people have entered the field of portrait photography, and the increased competition and high overhead costs have caused many storefront portrait studios to falter. Many photographers, myself included, now work out of their homes in studios that rival those of storefront portrait studios.

For many years, I created portraits in my unfinished 900+ square-foot basement before deciding to remain in my space and build a permanent studio within my home. My decision to invest in my home and business has been the best decision for me. I create more custom, boutique-style portraits, and my clients attend their sessions by appointment only. A home studio isn't right for everyone, however, and you must choose the option that's the best fit for you. Having a solid understanding of the pros and cons of running a home studio should help you conceptualize your own path.

Pros

- Working from a home studio space will allow you to keep costs down while perfecting your craft. The money you'd spend on renting a fancy storefront can be invested in improving your posing and lighting skills. As your skill set improves and your business grows, you can decide whether to remain in your home or move into a storefront.
- Location is everything. If you are shopping for a new home and want to work from a home studio, you must consider whether your desired client demographic will be drawn to your proposed location. You'll also want to be sure that your neighborhood is nice and tidy. The quality of life in your neighborhood will help your clients to form an opinion about your studio, and if the neighborhood is unpleasant, it will do your business a disservice.
- Working from home allows for lots of flexibility, which can especially come in handy if you have a family. For example, you can schedule a creative portrait session around the furnace repair guy's visit or a sick child. With a home studio, the need to miss a day's work to attend to an issue at home is a thing of the past.
- There are some tax advantages you may be able to claim while operating your studio and office from your home. It is best to talk with your tax advisor to determine your particular tax situation.
- Another great advantage to running a home studio is that it's a great incentive to keep everything neat and orderly. There's nothing worse than having a client come for a session when your house smells of dirty diapers! *(Note:* Strong food odors can make a poor impression too. Never cook fish the night before a session. No amount of air freshener will eliminate the smell!)

Cons

- For some types of photography, the 8-foot ceiling height in many homes can be restrictive. Hair and accent lights on a boom, for instance, require more room than such ceiling heights allow. I have 10-foot ceilings in my home studio, and it is challenging to create a full-length fashion image without the top of my background showing. Of course, a proficient retoucher can mitigate this problem.
- Though running a home studio is a more popular choice than it ever was in the past, your business may not appear as reputable as a storefront studio. Therefore, you'll have to work harder to

create outstanding imagery and create a professional working environment. You'll also need to display some great sample images on your walls. In my opinion, it doesn't matter where you create your portraits. It's the techniques you use to create your images that make them stand out.

- Working from your home can be constraining at times. Some people cannot handle living in and working from the same location. They need a change of scenery. To head off this issue, get out and network in your community. Joining online social networks is a lot of fun, but just how social are you being when you are sitting at home communicating via a computer?
- Working from home can make you a bit complacent and lazy. Create a schedule that works well for you and concentrate on your business during that time, even if you don't have a session booked that day. It's quite easy to get distracted by household chores/obligations and neglect your business needs.
- Since you are working within your home, the security of your personal space could present a problem. It is best not to advertise your home studio address on your business cards, web site, or automobile. Obtaining a post office box for mail and a separate unlisted phone number for your business may be a wise choice. It's also a good idea to purchase liability insurance for your business (keep it separate from your homeowner's insurance).

Final Thoughts

- Always consult with a tax advisor prior to opening a business in your home.
- Be sure to have a detailed conversation on the phone with prospective clients before giving them your home address and booking an appointment. Screening your clients is a responsibility that should not be taken lightly.
- It's also a good idea to have an assistant present during every photo sessions—both for liability reasons and for your physical safety.
- It's not the space in which a photograph is created that makes it great, it's the lighting technique used to light the subject.
- If you are building your home studio, be certain that you place your background in an area where you have adequate depth to shoot with a longer focal length lens.
- It is a good idea to set aside space that can be used as a dressing/styling room. I subcontract

Setup shot by Daniel Hagmaier of Positive Images.

hair/makeup artists for many sessions. My 12x12-foot room (above) is large enough to accommodate several models, wardrobe, and hair/makeup artists comfortably.

- Your studio should appear as professional as possible. I keep my essential modifiers and accessories within reach on my modifier wall.
- A stereo is essential for any studio. Ask your clients to bring their favorite music to play during their session. It will make them more relaxed.

4. FINDING GOOD HELP

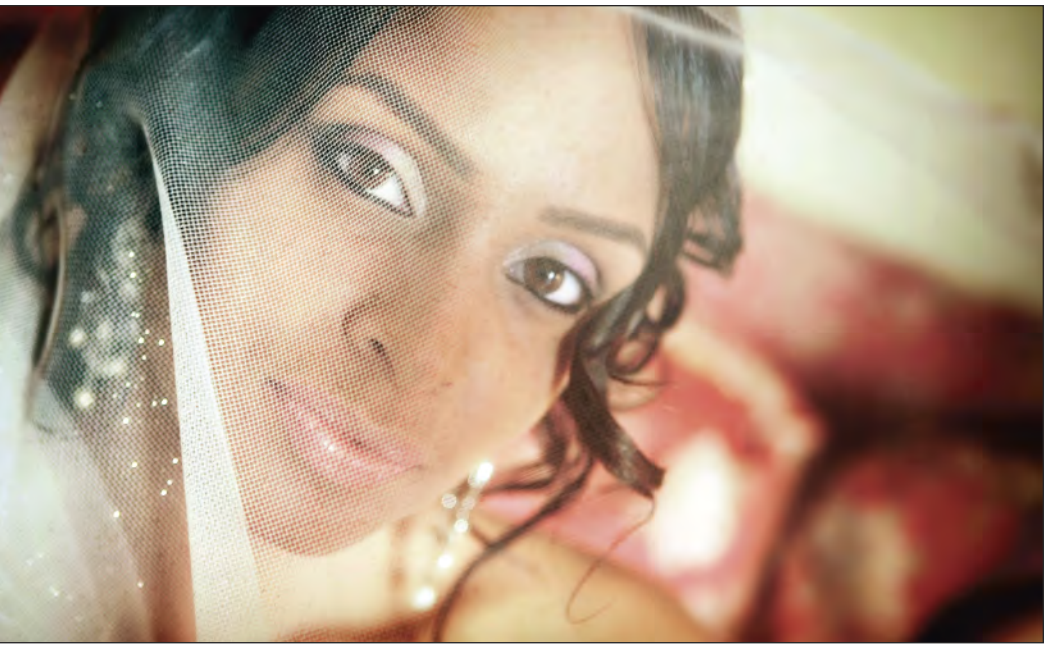
Finding good help can be tough these days, and it's wise for you to have realistic expectations when seeking employees or contract laborers. Let's take a look at some of the things you should consider before making this commitment.

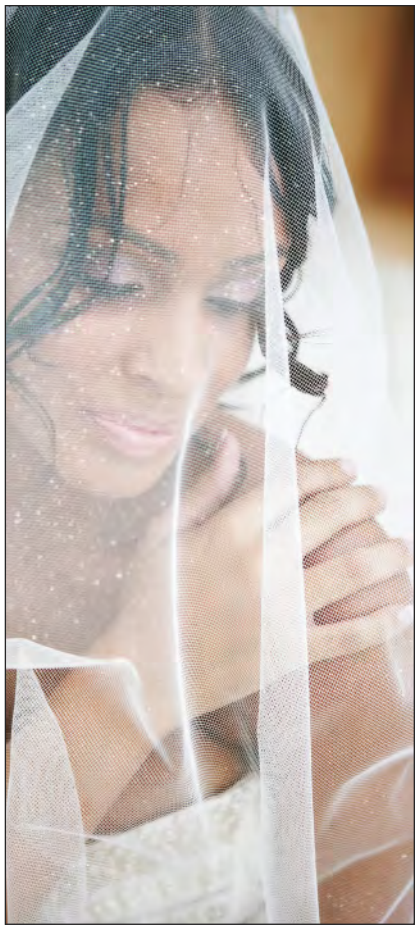
SUBCONTRACTORS

When you are just getting started in this business, subcontractors are the way to go. The beauty of the contract laborer is that you have made no long-term commitment to them. You only use them as needed, and you do not have to pay them during slow times. If you do not enjoy working with them, there is no need to rely on their services again.

BEFORE YOU USE A SUBCONTRACTOR'S SERVICES, YOU MUST HAVE THEM FILL OUT A W-9.

Before you use a subcontractor's services, you must have them fill out a W-9. The form requires pertinent information such as the individual's Social Security number, address, phone number, etc. You or your accountant will use this information when sending these contractors their 1099 tax forms at the end of the year.





The challenge of finding good assistants today is this: It used to be that in order to get into this game, you'd need to outlay a substantial amount of money, at least $20,000, to acquire the necessary gear. Nowadays, one can purchase a prosumer system and an adequate computer for substantially less. The subcontractor can more easily compete with talented prospects who have formal training or on-the-job experience than they could in the past.

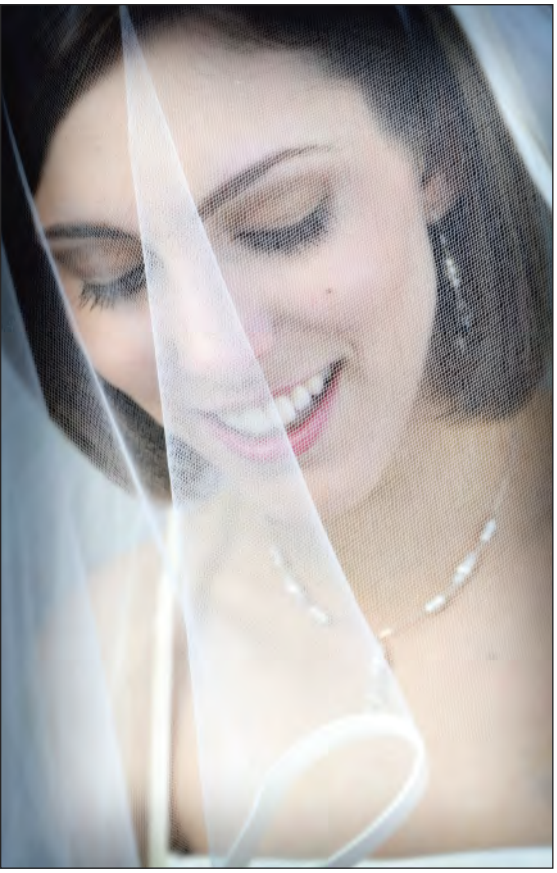
Good contractors work for several photographers at the same time. If you find a great contractor, treat them well. You may even want to take the next step and make them a bona fide employee.

EMPLOYEES

Employees have a lot more rights than contractors. Their service cannot be arbitrarily terminated. Be advised, once they are in your employ, you must pay for half of their Social Security and FICA. However, it's a small price to pay for a good employee.

When I'm looking to hire someone, I want to find a candidate who is on time, positive, and trustworthy. This good attitude goes a long way with me. If they can shoot, that's even better. It has been my experience that the really good shooters that interview will only be assistants for a short time and will go out on their own. I prefer the positive, upbeat, honest, trustworthy candidate with an empty cup—one who does not know everything (or think that they do). I want someone I can mold to my liking.

So, how do you go about finding these eager candidates? Craigslist is a wonderful place to put up a free help wanted posting. It will work in just



COMMUNITY COLLEGES, ART SCHOOLS, AND UNIVERSITIES ARE ANOTHER GREAT RESOURCE FOR FINDING ASSOCIATES.

about any part of the country, and best of all it is free. Here is one word of warning: Whenever I have posted for help on Craigslist, and I have done so several times, some peculiar characters have applied. We've obtained good help, but the interview process can be scary!

Here are a few tips I have learned along the way: When using Craigslist, I like to interview only those candidates who have taken the time to make their own web site. There are certainly exceptions to the rule, but I feel serious candidates can easily make and afford their own web sites nowadays. You will be bombarded by posers, so this is a way to weed out the scary candidates. Also, when I do schedule interviews, I am very up front that the interview is a meet and greet and will probably be ten to fifteen minutes. That way, if I want to spend more time, I can, but if not, I can end the interview quickly without hurting anyone's feelings.

Community colleges, art schools, and universities are another great resource for finding associates. We have just completed our first internship with University of Central Florida. Our intern worked for free sixteen hours a week for a semester. In turn, I worked with her on her photography and wrote an evaluation at the end of her internship. It was a small price to pay, and we now have a very competent freelance contractor whose services we rely upon on an ongoing basis.

When you first bring an associate on board, keep your expectations low. Evaluate their progress ninety days after they start, and if they don't seem to be working out, go your separate ways.

5. LEGAL ISSUES

As a photographer, you probably think of yourself as an artist. However, whether you've considered it or not, you wear a second hat as well: if you are selling your images, you are also a businessperson.

In this chapter, we'll outline some of the critical legal pointers you need to understand in order to protect yourself from litigation, lost wages, and other potential land mines.

CONTRACTS

THE FIRST AND BEST WAY TO PROTECT YOURSELF IS WITH A GOOD CONTRACT.

The first and best way to protect yourself is with a good contract. You can use the sample contract that follows as a basis for your own.

Our contract is fair, but it is designed to protect us. Feel free to use any part of this contract that you wish. You should contact an attorney and have them look over this or any other contract you decide to use to ensure that you are fully protected.

AGREEMENT FOR WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY SERVICES

This agreement, entered into on 00/00/00 [today's date], is between Damon Tucci Photography and the undersigned (hereinafter "the client") relating to the event of the below-named individuals.

Additional time is billed at $500/hr + tax.

Service Coverage: The parties agree that Damon Tucci Photography will furnish the services of the professional photographer. Simultaneous photographic coverage by another professional photographer with the intention to deliver or sell prints releases Damon Tucci Photography from this agreement, unless an arrangement has been reached by all parties involved. Any retainer or additional payments that may have been paid will not be refunded in the event that this should occur.

Reservation Fees and Payment Policy: A $1500 reservation fee is required to reserve your event date. This amount is deducted from your total coverage price. This reservation fee is nonrefundable upon cancellation or rescheduling of your event. If the event is rescheduled, a new deposit will be required in order to reserve your new date. 100 percent of the final balance will be due thirty days prior to the event. Only a signed contract and payment in full will guarantee that your event will be covered.

Fees and Expenses, Payment, and Collection Terms: The client and client's representatives are jointly and severally responsible for full payment of all fees, charges, and expenses. Additional compensation is required for any subsequent changes, additions, or variations requested by the client. All fees and expenses due to Damon Tucci Photography are payable by the client, as set forth on the face of this order. In any action to enforce the terms of this order, Damon Tucci Photography shall be entitled to recover their attorney's fees, court costs, and the maximum interest rate allowable by law. Any lawsuits pertaining to this matter arising under or growing out of this order shall be instituted and maintained exclusively in the state of Florida, Damon Tucci Photography's principle place of business.

Client _____

Date _____

Cancellation and Postponement Policies: A "postponement" is the rescheduling in writing of the assignment by the client to a mutually agreeable date within 180 calendar days of the original assignment date. A "cancellation" is the permanent notification in writing to Damon Tucci Photography by the client that the assignment will not happen. All cancellations must be made in writing. If the client cancels an assignment within seven calendar days of the initial contract, all fees collected will be refunded. All cancellations in writing must be postmarked prior to this seven-day limit. After seven calendar days from the initial contract, the client shall pay a cancellation fee of 35 percent or reservation fee, whichever is greater, of the gross fees contracted for the entire assignment, including sales tax. If the client cancels with less than 120 calendar days' prior written notice, the client shall pay 100 percent of all Damon Tucci Photography's contracted fees and appropriate sales tax.

Product Pricing: Pricing is defined on your own original price list. Damon Tucci Photography warrants all prices quoted for professional services, photographs, and albums are valid for a period of sixty days after the event. Orders placed after sixty days following the wedding date will be billed at the currently published pricing, which may be greater. All album prints and additional reprints are standard machine prints unless otherwise decided by Damon Tucci Photography. If the client desires custom prints, retouching, or digital services for album or additional reprints, additional fees may apply.

Limitation of Liability: While every reasonable effort will be made to produce and deliver outstanding photographs of the wedding event, Damon Tucci Photography's entire liability to the client for any claim

or loss or injury arising from Damon Tucci Photography's performance is limited to a refund to the client of the amount paid for services. Because this is an uncontrolled event, Damon Tucci Photography cannot guarantee delivery of any specifically requested image(s). In the unlikely event of personal illness or other circumstances beyond the control of Damon Tucci Photography, a substitute photographer with high qualifications, subject to the acceptance by the client prior to the event, may be dispatched to fulfill the obligations of photography herein contracted. In the case the client declines accepting a substitute photographer, client may instead terminate this agreement and receive a full refund of all deposits paid to Damon Tucci Photography.

Albums and Master CD/DVD: All album orders (image numbers submitted) must be placed within twelve months of the event date. After twelve months has passed, Damon Tucci Photography is no longer obligated to fulfill the order. Any subsequent orders will be subject to current prices and will incur a penalty of $300. Master CD/DVDs will cost $500 if not picked up within the twelve-month period. Once you have turned in your image list, it will take three to four weeks to create your unique layout. During the album-creation process, you may request up to four changes to your online layout. Any changes after that will be billed at $25.00 per change.

All copyright laws pertain (see below).

Federal Copyright Laws: Damon Tucci Photography retains the rights to reproduction of any images produced in connection with this agreement. These images may be used for advertising or commercial gain by Damon Tucci, without prior consent from client. Images produced under this contract are protected by federal copyright laws, and provisions thereof will be enforced to the fullest extent allowable. Copies of any photographs may not be made without the permission of Damon Tucci and/or Damon Tucci Photography.

Initial here _____

Proprietary Images: Damon Tucci Photography owns copyrights to all images. Any sale, reproduction, publication or exhibition of any images produced in connection with this agreement, regardless of the ownership of the actual photograph, is prohibited without specific consent of Damon Tucci. Not withstanding the foregoing, the parties agree that Damon Tucci Photography may reproduce, publish, sell as stock, or exhibit a judicious selection of such photographs as samples of photographic work to be shown to prospective clients and for instructional purposes consistent with the highest standards of taste and judgment.

There are a total of two pages to this agreement.

Client _____

Date _____

Please carefully review, sign, and return the original agreement to Damon Tucci Photography. Please make a copy for your files.

MODEL RELEASES

Obtaining a model release for every subject you photograph is critical, as the release will give you the indisputable right to use the images as you see fit. When we are photographing people under the age of eighteen, we require the signature of a parent or guardian on the release form. You can find sample model release forms at www.ppa.com.

INSURANCE

Equipment Insurance. As a business owner, insurance is a must. At the very least, you should have equipment insurance. Policies range from $0 deductibles to $1000 deductibles per incident. $1000 is a small price to pay if your bag is stolen or if your home or place of business is robbed. Hill and Usher, and Marsh Affinity are a couple of companies that specialize in

CONTRACTS AND MORE

You can find sample contracts, model releases, and other documents at www.ppa.com.

photographer's equipment insurance and business liability plans. We have about $20,000 worth of "scheduled" gear with a $1000 deductible and a $2 million liability policy for $900 a year. "Scheduled equipment" is insurance for a list of current equipment, including model numbers, serial numbers, and replacement values.

IF YOU SERVE ALCOHOL AT PARTIES OR VIEWING SESSIONS, BE SURE TO ASK FOR HOST LIABILITY INSURANCE.

Liability Insurance. Business liability insurance is also a must. In fact, it is required by most major hoteliers and theme parks. Disney or the Ritz will ask for your insurance certificate before you are allowed to shoot on their property. This is standard practice, and it is great to have, because if your associate knocks over a $50,000 piece of artwork, you're covered. Do not fear. Even though the $2 million liability policy sounds expensive, it runs in the neighborhood of $400 to $500 annually. It's the price of doing business.

Host Liability Insurance. If you serve alcohol at parties or viewing sessions, be sure to ask for host liability insurance. This plan protects you from someone imbibing a little too much at your event and then getting into an accident. It is relatively inexpensive, and it could save your business.

Comprehensive Coverage. If you do have a commercial space, you will want a more comprehensive business owner's policy. Your agent will determine if this is a good fit for you. This plan usually protects the premises as well as the contents. Windows and awnings and other things commercial renters are liable for are also covered.

PPA Indemnification Program. PPA has a wonderful program for wedding photographers. As a member, you are entitled to the PPA Indemnification Program. It costs an additional $50 a year, and it is worth every penny. It is a unique malpractice protection program that is exclusively available to PPA members in both the United States and Canada. It is designed to protect you against allegations of negligence for issues beyond your control.

6. CHOOSING A SPECIALTY

WEDDINGS NEVER GO OUT OF STYLE. EVEN IN A RECESSION, PEOPLE GET MARRIED—AND WEDDINGS PAY WELL.

The most profitable fields for photographers are weddings, portraiture, commercial work, and senior portrait photography—and you may choose to focus on one specialty or try your hand at each one. I am classically trained in many photographic areas and take assignments of all types. I am known for my wedding photography, however, and weddings are my bread and butter. The specialty just seems to let me put my best foot forward.

Let's discuss these four types of photography:

WEDDINGS

Tying the knot never goes out of style. Even in a recession, people get married—and weddings pay well. Some people get married more than once. Weddings have become big business. According to the Association of Bridal Consultants, or ABC (www.bridalassn.com), the wedding business is a $165 billion-a-year industry, and there are 2.4 million weddings in the United States each year.

Wedding trends and "seasons" vary from one geographic region to the next. In the Northeast, the majority of weddings are held in May through September, and winter weddings are less popular. In Orlando, our "season" is yearlong. Although the summer months can be uncomfortable, people still get married.

Destination weddings, weddings where the couple travels with a close-knit or sometimes a big group of guests, are growing very popular. In Orlando, we service our share of destination brides coming from Europe, Asia, or other parts of the United States to get married on the beach or at one of our theme parks.

Certain photographers, such as Susan Stripling and Garrett Nudd, have designed their marketing plans around this market and have become destination-wedding specialists of sorts. Remember when taking on one of these events, the travel aspect can be fun and adventurous—however, instead of shooting for one day, you may be sequestered for a week, oftentimes staying at the same resort as the bride and groom. I take these assignments on a case-by-case basis. Usually, I use these events as a vacation and accept ones that are at places I would like to go. We then extend our stay and make it a mini vacation. Destination weddings may seem glamorous, but in reality, they eat up a lot of time and require a lot of work. If

For Love, Not Money

There are many ways to make money in this world. I am certain that there are better ways to amass wealth than being a professional photographer. In other words, do not enter this industry solely for financial gain. Enter it because you feel compelled to—because you love the art of photography. When you do, you'll find it is tremendously rewarding.

done right, however, you can walk away with world-class portfolio images that will blow your competition away, and have the experience of a lifetime.

WEDDINGS MAY BE THE EASIEST MARKET TO BREAK INTO. IT IS ALSO THE ONE THAT BEARS THE MOST RESPONSIBILITY.

Weddings may be the easiest market to break into. It is also the one that bears the most responsibility. No, it's not cardiac surgery, but no one wants to be the person who has to tell the bride and groom, "Hey, I ruined your wedding." People take this very seriously, so do not go into this ill equipped. Do not try to learn while you earn. Make sure your skills are up to the task at hand. There are several ways for the burgeoning wedding photographer to accomplish this. Volunteer to shoot a friend's wedding for free. There are plenty of people who, for whatever reason (maybe economic ones), forego hiring a professional. You can volunteer to photograph one of these to get your feet wet. Just make sure to be up front and tell the bride and groom that you are just learning and you will try your best. Anything that you get will be better than nothing. Also, you can attempt to shadow or assist a local pro in your area. Wedding photographers are always in need of a good assistant, so reach out, and you may be surprised. In my opinion, weddings are a great area of focus. You can work out of a commercial space or from an in-home office.

If you're struggling to make the profits you're after, you can consider supplementing your wedding focus with one of the other specialities below. After all, most weddings are held on weekends, and you can put some hours in by delving into portrait, commercial, or senior photography sessions Monday through Friday if you're so inclined.

THE TEAM APPROACH TO LARGE WEDDINGS

Once in a while, we have we have been fortunate enough to photograph celebrity clients. I have photographed sports legends Marshall Faulk and Horace Grant and one of the Backstreet Boys, Howie Dorough. I have also been fortunate enough to photograph some ostentatious, million-dollar events. These events can be very exciting, and they can also be very lucrative. They require a totally different mind-set. The stakes are higher, and so is the pressure. Perform well on the right one, and that can be your ticket in to the rich and famous. Fall on your face, and you'll never work in this town again. Here is how I have tackled such events: When doing these large jobs, the lead photographer must perform almost as a director. I employ a team of four or more. I am fortunate to have been in this business for a while, and I have a large pool of friends/colleagues I can call on to form the dream team for these events. Our fees are upward of $20,000 for these types of events. That gives us the budget to staff accordingly. It's better to have more hands on deck than less.

The largest, most lucrative events I have photographed were Indian and Jewish events.

There are a lot of balls to juggle when you are working these events. There are many times when important events are simultaneously going on in different locations. Typically, I stick to the bride and have other staff members photograph the group, capture detail shots, etc.

Let's not forget Indian and Jewish ceremonies. The largest, most lucrative events I have photographed were Indian and Jewish events. Indian events are a wonderful departure from traditional Christian ceremonies. The colors are vibrant, and the customs and rituals are fascinating. Indian weddings usually last three days or more and pay accordingly. Jewish weddings are rich in tradition. They are wonderful celebrations of life. The families are very close and, in my experience, they are a lot of fun. I love being in the middle of the hora with a fisheye lens on my camera—it's like shooting a rock concert. Both of these events require a rudimentary knowledge of the cultures to capture them effectively. While I was working at Disney, they had a rabbi come in and teach the non-Jewish photographers about the important elements of a Jewish wedding. You can also find out a lot of information online or check out *Photographing Jewish Weddings* (Stan Turkel; Amherst Media, 2009).

My experience with Indian events was a little different. A young couple came to me for my contemporary style. Many mainstream Indian photographers are very traditional in their approach. They tend to cater to the parents rather than the bride and groom. Anyway, I explained that I knew little about their culture but was up for the challenge. They assigned me a family member to help guide me on the must-have shots. That was many Indian events ago. Eventually, I got the hang of it, even though in my experience all of the Indian events I have photographed are a little different.

The bottom line is that both of these events are very lucrative and very enjoyable. Both cultures place a very high value on family and photographs. These are tight-knit communities, and if you do a great job for one of these clients, chances are you will be receiving calls from their friends soon.

PORTRAITURE

The portrait studio business module is evolving at a rapid pace. On very hot summer days and when it's raining, snowing, etc., it's nice to be able to shoot in a climate-controlled studio.

The portrait business is one of the most difficult fields of photography to break into. It typically requires the largest investment of the four specialties. If done correctly, however, it can be extremely lucrative. Another benefit is that you can have your weekends off.

THE PORTRAIT BUSINESS IS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT FIELDS OF PHOTOGRAPHY TO BREAK INTO.

Boutique studios—small, fashionable studios that provide unique products and highly personalized services—are all the rage these days. Sarah Petty, Jeff and Julia Woods, Rod Evans, Jed and Vicki Taufer, and Lori Nordstrom have wonderful spaces.

Boutique studios focus on high-end family and children's portraits. They focus on the whole experience from the initial sales inquiry to hanging the collection in the client's home. Costs to design and build such spaces are high, and marketing can be expensive as well. Mall displays can run upward of $5000 a month—yep, that's for the mall display, not the studio.

I'm not trying to dissuade anyone from specializing in portraiture. It's a noble effort, and not everyone needs to start out with $20,000 a month overhead. Start small and build from there. Vicki and Jed Taufer started

Photo by Kevin Elwell.

Photo by Kevin Elwell.

out in the basement at her home, and now they have one of the most fabulous operations ever seen.

SENIOR PORTRAITS

Senior portraits are another area of focus in photography. Typically, this new medium is not a high-volume, contract-oriented business. Rather, it is a high-end alternative for the discerning student. The specialty is very popular and quite lucrative.

TODAY'S SENIORS WANT A FASHION-ORIENTED PORTRAIT SESSION THAT TELLS A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THEIR PERSONALITY.

Long gone are the days of the Olan Mills yearbook shot. Today's seniors want a fashion-oriented portrait session that tells a little bit about their personality. Photographers like Kirk Voclain are really pushing this medium to its limits. The new senior market is fun and exciting, and studios that specialize in it are creating new and exciting photographic approaches and sessions like "trash the prom dress." These studios also rely on a more modern approach to marketing. To reach their target audience, they market to students via social networking sites like MySpace and Facebook.

Senior Portrait Artists (SPA; www.spartists.com) is an organization on a constant quest to provide information for the senior photographer in a creative, artistic, and innovative form from both inside and outside the photography industry. They are a fabulous resource for those who specialize in the genre as well as those who shoot the occasional senior session.

COMMERCIAL/ADVERTISING

Commercial/advertising has traditionally been a lucrative market, but it is a tough field to break into. Major corporations who used to spend tons of money on photography now buy their own digital SLRs for their in-house art department employees and eliminate the need to hire a pro. By doing the work in house, they get their images immediately and eliminate the cost of hiring a middle man. In recent years, therefore, photographers have found their best chances for being hired lie in major markets like NYC, LA and, believe it or not, Minnesota and Des Moines (there are big publishing houses in the latter locations). In a market like Central Florida, the commercial work has all but dried up. Colleagues who used to thrive with commercial accounts are now trying their hand at weddings to make ends meet in the slow times. This is a tough row to hoe unless you move to one of those major markets.

If you want to make it in this field, again, you'll do best in a big market. When you get there, apprentice for someone whose work you admire, and get ready to pay your dues. Ideally, you will have a specialty like liquid shots, food, editorial, etc. Even though this field is tough to break into, it can be exciting and glamorous.

As you can see, there are many areas of focus for your business. These are just my top four. There are also corporate, real estate, etc. As a professional, I feel it is best to specialize, but if the odd senior or commercial job comes along and you are comfortable doing it, why not supplement your income?

A Noteworthy Artist

Jack Reznicki of NYC is a great example of a successful commercial/advertising photographer. To learn more about him and to see some of his work, visit his web site at www.reznicki.com.

7. PRODUCTS AND PRICING

So, you've got a studio space, you've purchased all of the gear you'll need, and you've landed a client. Now you'll need to determine what products you want to sell or, better still, which items will have the most appeal for your target demographic.

NOW YOU'LL NEED TO DETERMINE WHAT PRODUCTS YOU WANT TO SELL. . . .

PRINTS

Miller's Professional Imaging (www.millerslab.com) has grown to be the largest professional lab organization in the United States, and we rely on them for all of our printing needs. They provide professional prints and press products for professional photographers in all fifty states. Since their inception, they have developed a reputation for having the highest-quality products, customer service, and technologies in the industry and have become the preferred lab of professional photographers nationwide.

When we opened our studio, we ordered eight 30x40-inch metallic linen texture prints mounted on ¾-inch gator board on a Tuesday. They arrived on Thursday, and they looked awesome. The prices were awesome too. They are a great partner for our business because they make us look great. They are very user friendly, and though other labs have sent us disappointing prints, we have never had a bad experience with Miller's.

Miller's now offers some interesting new products, including fine art acrylic prints, fine art metals, as well as my personal favorites—large metallic prints with linen texture. Recently they have began producing albums as well.

We also print in house on our Epson 4800. We order our supplies from LexJet. LexJet is an excellent partner for your business. They have excellent live phone support. They will give you tech support on your printer even if you did not buy it from them. They also have an excellent turnaround time on their products. It is usually one to two days.

FRAMES

Frames are an effective up-selling product. We use a company called GW Moulding (gwmoulding.com). Their product line is amazing. Be advised the 20x30- and 30x40-inch framed collections that we sell are not inexpensive, but they are worth every penny. (We mark them up so that they're priced at two-and-a-half to three times our cost. Be sure that you include the special freight shipping costs and any labor involved in putting the images together!) We hang our beautifully framed images in our clients' homes, and they are breathtaking.

ALBUMS

Albums aren't just for weddings anymore. They are also used to showcase children's, senior's, and family portraits—and they're really exciting!

There are several album companies out there, and new ones enter into the marketplace every day. There is a learning curve when you begin working with a new album design company. You'll need to learn about what's available and how to navigate the ordering system. We've used four companies—GraphiStudio, Leather Craftsmen, Kambara, and Miller's—for years, and we like them very much. Here are the pros and cons of each:

GraphiStudio is an Italian printing press that makes gorgeous wedding books. In my opinion, what made them popular is their mini (4x5-inch) companion books. These are an exact miniature reproduction of the primary book, and eight mini books will cost you around $200. You can also order them in a quantity of fifty—the price is very reasonable, and the books make for excellent marketing and promotional pieces.

GraphiStudio's mini books or parent's albums make excellent add-ons to your basic packages. They offer plenty of cover options, including Crystal Glance (metallic print mounted under acrylic) leather, metal, metallic varnish, and many others. Page options include smooth, photographic, metallic, and a couple more. This company is based out of Italy, but they have representatives in the United States who are very helpful. It is nice to have Vonage if you do a large volume of business with GraphiStudio,

Underpromise and Overdeliver

Your reputation as an artist and a fair and reputable businessperson is one of your most valuable assets. It takes a long time to establish it, but it can be tarnished in the blink of an eye, so always be sure to guard it wisely.

One of the ways to impress and please your clients is to underpromise and overdeliver. I've been doing it for the last twenty years, and it's worked well.

For example, if you tell your client their album will be ready in two weeks and it takes six, you'll have a problem. Always give your client the worst-case scenario timeline; that way they will be pleasantly surprised if it is early.

We are very honest and up front with our clients. If there is a problem, we let our clients know immediately and include them in the solution. In our profession, there is no licensing or academia required to open shop and anyone—sometimes an unscrupulous anyone—can open shop and exhibit atrocious business practices. We have all seen studios going out of business and absconding with client's deposits as they leave town under the cover of darkness. You can distinguish yourself from these businesses with above-average client service.

though, as you'll be able to call Italy toll-free any time you need to (once you subscribe). For more information, go to www.graphistudio.com.

THERE ARE SEVERAL ALBUM COMPANIES OUT THERE, AND NEW ONES ENTER INTO THE MARKETPLACE EVERY DAY.

Leather Craftsmen, located in Farmingdale, New York, has been making wedding albums since 1942, and they are a leader in leather-bound albums. They have album styles that range from the very traditional to contemporary to avant-garde. All of their albums are hand crafted, with the exception of the 400 series (these albums are covered in genuine leather). I really like their 3500 coffee-table series. They offer bind only, print and bind, and design/print/bind services. For more information, go to www.leathercraftsmen.com.

Kambara albums have a very contemporary look. I love the panoramic style. The acrylic covers are wild. My favorite is called Rain (see below). These albums are fantastic. One drawback is that you can't include too many images in them. Also, since the pages are quite thick, your page count is limited. For the right wedding, however, the look is awesome. Check out www.kambara.com for more info.

Miller's new and exciting ready-to-deliver albums are ready in less than a week! With four different types of albums, including the flush-mount hinged, flush-mount panorama, Legend, and iMount varieties, they have exactly what you're looking for. For the two flush-mount styles, they offer a variable page option and eighteen different cover choices. Their Legend and iMount albums are available in a variety of sizes and page quantities, plus they're covered with high-quality, black Italian leather. Depending on

Lagniappe

In our business, we embrace the baker's dozen mentality. Our wedding packages are expensive. If a client requests a favor—a file for the newspaper or Internet, a rush 8x10-inch print—we give it to them. In Louisiana, they call this "little something extra" *lagniappe.* Who doesn't appreciate getting a little something for free? It makes the client feel special. We do not nickel and dime our clients. We treat them like family and, because of that, we sleep well at night.

your album and cover selection, you'll have your order within just two to five days.

Miller's also provides free, PC-based software that allows you to color correct each individual image in your album order. Their software also features hundreds of "drag and drop" customizable templates, which make album design easy. If you're designing the album digitally, you can load your flattened files, and they will perform an overall color correction to all pages. Visit Miller's web site at www.millerslab.com for more information.

NOVELTY ITEMS

Novelty items like coffee mugs, key chains, cutouts, and calendars are also great additions to your product line. Some photographers sell photo bracelets, lockets, blankets and pillows, and totes and handbags, too. Gina Alexander offers couture handbags for discerning clientele. These handbags have appeared on *The Dr. Phil Show,* and in several magazines, including *Elle, People,* and *US* magazine. The designer has been interviewed numerous times by Oprah as well. Go to www.ginaalexander.com for additional information.

The Internet is full of fresh and exciting ways to sell or display your images. Some may be cheesy. It's up to you to decide which options will most appeal to your clients and will make you the most money.

PACKAGES

All of our products are sold to our wedding clients in packages. Yes, our packages are expensive, but they include everything we think our clients need. We like to charge up front and then not nickel and dime our clients after the fact.

So, what's in a package? We offer four different packages, and they run from small to extra large. Our "package 2," for example, includes online proofs and proof magazines, and a $2100 album credit (this will pay for an album large enough to tell the story of the day, but the client can apply the credit to a larger, more expensive album and pay the difference in cost if they desire). This package also includes a DVD of master files, which are delivered when the album is completed. Clients have the option to add parent or mini albums to their order as well.

We showcase our images online through Zen Folio (www.zenfolio.com). It is one of the least expensive online hosting companies. About six months after the wedding, we present our clients with a DVD containing the master files from their event. This way, we have six months to get reprint orders before the client even sees their DVD of images.

Not all photographers are comfortable with the idea of giving their clients a DVD. Some studios never release one, others charge $250 to

$500, and still others make their clients wait a year before they give it to them. Our contract permits the client to use the photos for any personal usage. I retain any commercial rights or profits that may arise from these photos. Ultimately, you must do what is right for you.

SETTING PRICES AND COLLECTING PAYMENTS

Weddings. When it comes to establishing prices for your wedding services and packages, it seems you just can't win. People will tell you that you've priced things too high, and others will argue that you've priced them too low. Ultimately, each one of us must decide what is best.

My own experiences have played out like this: In 2000, I left a ten-year career as a photographer at Disney. It was great working there, because I was completely focused on shooting. Perhaps because of this focus, though, I lacked the business know-how that I needed to enter the workforce. Luckily, in 2000, there were only a handful of competitors, and I did fairly well.

Early in my career, I did a fair amount of commercial work. It always chapped me that I would have to outlay all my expenses up front. I'd hope to achieve a 30 to 50 percent retainer, and then I would have to hound the client's accounts payable department to secure the balance of the payment due.

Now that I am primarily shooting weddings, things are different. We charge a $1500 nonrefundable retainer to hold the date. The balance is due thirty days prior to the event. With our payment schedule set up this way, we are always paid in full before we've taken a single picture. I like it this way. (Note that you'll need to have a solid reputation to pull this off.)

The method I just described is not the only way to set up your payment schedule. Many photographers collect ⅓ of the total cost as a retainer, ⅓ thirty days prior to the event, and the final ⅓ when the proofs are deliv-

ered. Some colleagues like this payment system because they feel it spreads out their cash flow. Ultimately, you must do what you and your clients are comfortable with.

The pricing for our wedding packages includes six, eight, or ten hours of coverage, plus the services of two photographers. (*Note:* The second photographer shoots during the ceremony and reception. During the balance of the day's shoot, he or she holds a reflector or video light and assists the primary photographer.) The clients also receive online proofing for six months, a proof magazine (bound proof sheets), credit toward an album, and a high-resolution master DVD of everything in the proof magazine. The album credit can also be used for engagement sessions, prints, or anything on our à la carte list. The idea is to give the client plenty of freedom.

All pricing is confusing to the client. It is your job to adequately explain your costs to them so that they don't think you are trying to run a shell game on them. We charge a hefty fee up front and try not to nickel and dime our clients after the fact. We still have plenty of opportunities for up selling, especially with albums. (The GraphiStudio 4x5-inch minis, parent albums, and larger one-hundred-page albums are popular. Our clients love so many of the shots that the number of the clients' selected images exceed the one-hundred-and-twenty image capacity of the smaller album and they must upgrade.)

Another approach is to charge an image creation fee (this typically covers image capture and the costs associated with posting the images online) and then sell everything à la carte. This system allows the client to pick and choose exactly what they need or want. Unfortunately, in my experience, many clients who opt for this don't come back and order more. In the end, they are frustrated that they paid $4500 just to see their images online. Negative perceptions are not what we're striving for.

Another trend for some of my colleagues is the shoot and burn

approach. This game plan seems to work well for the solo photographer who does not want to spend a lot of time making albums and working in front of the computer. These folks tell their prospective clients that they offer self-service coverage, meaning that they will shoot and edit the images and deliver them on CD, leaving the client with the responsibility to have their images printed at a local lab or through an online service like Snapfish or Blurb. Such photographers shoot the events only and charge around $2000 for six hours (in my area). They do not invest a lot of time in production after the event. I'm not advocating or admonishing this. This is

A Disappearing Act?

Paper proofs and DVDs are not essential in this market. Many photographers present a wedding-day slide show at the reception and steer wedding guests to an online hosting site where they can view their images and place orders.

America, and you may compete as you wish. Many clients are skilled in Photoshop and other programs, and for them, this service can be a great fit. On the flip side, many clients buy into this service and have no idea what to do with their image files. In this case, I feel that the approach can be a huge disservice to our buying public.

So, what are your services worth? Truth be told, the principles of supply and demand will help you regulate your pricing. I'd love to scale back to one wedding a year, priced at a million dollars. Unfortunately, I don't think that's going to happen anytime soon. Do not be afraid to raise or lower your prices as you see fit. If you have a $10,000 creation fee and your phone never rings, you may want to lower your prices. If you're giving everything away for $1500 and you're shooting one hundred and fifty weddings a year, you should raise your prices. I like to do thirty-five to forty weddings a year, and I set my prices accordingly.

THOUGH CONTROVERSIAL, A PRACTICE CALLED "BENCHMARKING" IS NOT A BAD IDEA EITHER.

Though controversial, a practice called "benchmarking" is not a bad idea either. Have a friend request pricing information from your competition. This can help you determine whether or not your prices are in line with your competitors'. (I'll admit it: I've done it.)

Don't be afraid to bend a bit to get the business you want. I've made some deals and have sweetened the pot when I've needed to. I've thrown in an additional hour of coverage or an engagement portrait to close the

deal. If you do this, just be sure that you're not giving away the farm.

Portraits. There are many innovative pricing strategies being employed by portrait photographers today. Julia Woods speaks about selling collections to the client before one image has been taken. These collections can run as high as $8000.

Other studios have set their session fees in the $75 to $500 range (this only covers the cost of creating the images) and present proofs via projection. No images—whether in the form of image files or prints—leave the studio until they are purchased. 8x10-inch prints can cost from $25 to $150. 20x30-inch prints range from $250 to $2000.

Yet another method is to charge, let's say, $1000 for a one-hour capture, a 20x30-inch print, and perhaps low-resolution digital files.

Ultimately, your pricing strategy is only limited by your creativity. No matter the method you choose, remember that business gurus suggest that your markup should be two-and-a-half to three times your cost. Don't forget to factor in your labor when determining this. Your expenses should be 25 percent of your price.

BUSINESS GURUS SUGGEST THAT YOUR MARKUP SHOULD BE TWO-AND-A-HALF TO THREE TIMES YOUR COST.

Senior Portraits. Pricing for senior portraiture can be constructed to mirror the system you choose for your general portrait photography. Ultimately, you'll need to do some research and perhaps experiment a bit to determine what works best for you. Many photographers charge an hourly fee and hold onto the image files. Others charge an image creation fee, present the images to their clients via projection, and sell the prints on a per-piece basis.

It is interesting to note that many studios are offering products that were never before offered: digital files that their clients want produced for use on Facebook, iPhones, etc.

Advertising/Commercial Photography. The price points for the advertising/commercial field vary widely depending on the client, the type of work, and the market in which the image will be used. A huge corporation, for instance, will use your images to reach a national or international audience. A local merchant might only use your image in a local newspaper/television/or web site ad.

GERARD TOMKO: A PASSION FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

Successful people know the vital role that passion plays in achieving extraordinary feats, and it is what enables Gerard Tomko to reach enviable heights and defy the odds—in the photography business and in his life. Jerry's passion for his work helped him win his battle against an aggressive cancer, and it fuels his enjoyment for photographing weddings, after all these years—twenty-eight to be exact!

Jerry's reliably good health was interrupted with the discovery of life-threatening stomach cancer in 2007. Within one year, he had 80 percent of his stomach removed, discovered first hand what chemotherapy was all about, indulged in twenty-five radiation treatments, and worked part time during the ordeal. He commented, "The couples I committed to kept me targeting a quicker-than-usual recovery. I did not want to disappoint them. My capable staff filled in for me on those weddings I could not photograph. I even did a few weddings that year wearing a chemo pump, but I never told them until after they saw their images!"

Located in Hatboro, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Philadelphia, he photographs area and destination weddings for clients who appreciate incredible imagery captured with an artistic eye. His clients find it easy to fall in love with his creative imagery along with his zest for life and sense of humor.

"My clients are like friends to me," Jerry continued. "In fact, I show up at a wedding feeling like a member of the family. I go about and do my job in an unassuming way as I give my best efforts to capture images that will get a 'wow!' response. I respect the trust that clients place in me when they hire me to photograph their wedding. What I do is an important job. I don't take the job lightly."

8. WORKFLOW

Most of us did not become photographers just so we could sit behind a computer all day. Yes I love Photoshop, but I like to go outside once in a while. Having an established workflow in place will reduce your hours working and let you get your life back. In this chapter, we'll review some helpful tools and processes that will save you time and perhaps a few headaches.

DOWNLOADING AND ORGANIZING YOUR IMAGES

In our studio, the first step of our workflow involves downloading the images from all of our cards, putting them into a client folder, and renaming all of the shots. We shoot RAW and JPEG files simultaneously. Though

the exposure is dead-on nearly 100 percent of the time, having a RAW file at our disposal is a good insurance policy should any image's exposure need adjusting. We back up the JPEG folder on DVD, and the disc is stored off site.

POSTPRODUCTION TOOLS

The most time-consuming aspect of shooting digitally is the work that photographers do to process their images and prepare them for their clients. There are a wide variety of programs on the market that can help you get the job done more efficiently.

I LOVE PHOTOSHOP AND ADOBE LIGHTROOM, BUT I DO THE LION'S SHARE OF MY EDITING IN PHOTOMECHANIC.

Editing Software. Once we've backed up our JPEG files, we are ready to begin editing. I love Photoshop and Adobe Lightroom, and I use both on occasion, but I do the lion's share of my editing in Photomechanic. I find that the program is extremely fast. We also use Adobe Bridge to create web galleries and design our album layouts.

Plug-ins. A plug-in is a software module that can be used by Photoshop and other image-editing programs to provide additional functions, including importing RAW files, file format conversions, and creative digital filters. Ron Nichols' Digital Solutions is an excellent retouching Photoshop plug-in. It's so easy to use that you can have your grandmother up to speed polishing images for you after about twenty minutes of training. We also rely on Marcus Bell's Lightroom plug-ins and, of course, Kevin Kubota's plug-ins.

Actions. Actions are recorded sequences of events within Photoshop that can easily be replayed to impart a specific effect while shortening the amount of time a photographer needs to spend enhancing and preparing

their images for final client presentation. Whether you create them yourself or buy them, they are a huge time saver. We really love Parker Pfister's actions. A great selection of actions are available from Kubota Image Tools as well.

Album Design Software. YSI (You Select It) is a wonderful album layout program. It dramatically reduces our album-creation time. The templates are very contemporary as well.

PREPARING YOUR IMAGES FOR PRESENTATION

IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO BACK UP ALL OF YOUR EDITED IMAGES ON DVD AND SAVE A COPY OFF SITE.

It's a good idea to back up all of your edited images on DVD and save a copy off site before proceeding with your proofing. When we upload our images to Zenfolio (our online hosting company), they are automatically backed up too. Needless to say, burning a DVD or having the images backed up online can save your hide in the event that a drive fails.

At our studio, we proof our images online. (Another benefit of using PhotoMechanic is that we can upload the edited images directly from the program to prepare our clients' presentations.) Our clients and their friends and family can place orders through our hosting site, www.zenfolio.com. About six months after the images have been posted, we present our clients with a DVD that contains all of their images. By this time, they have likely ordered all of the images they want online, so presenting the DVD does not eat away at our studio's potential profits.

KEVIN KUBOTA: ACTION HERO

Kevin Kubota, of Kubota PhotoDesign Inc. and Kubota Image Tools, has been photographing since 1980, and doing it professionally since 1990. He is a wedding and portrait photographer who operates a studio in beautiful Bend, Oregon. Information about Kevin Kubota and all Kubota Image Tools' products and workshops can be found at www.kubotaimagetools.com.

Kevin is recognized as one of the most influential photographers in our industry. His contributions to the industry include numerous tools that help us to reduce the amount of time spent finessing images in postproduction. A couple of these tools are outlined here.

Actions. Kubota Image Tools created the Dashboard as a way to revolutionize the process of image enhancement.

When I capture an image, there is a mood that I want to convey that most often doesn't show up in the RAW file.

Utilizing advanced keyword search functionality, users can quickly and easily launch and apply selected Kubota actions to create the fabulous, emotionally charged images they visualize.

Kevin says, "When I capture an image, there is a mood that I want to convey that most often doesn't show up in the RAW file. For example, some images I want to appear 'romantic', others, 'edgy' or 'funky.' I can type these words into the search bar of the Dashboard and a list of Kubota actions will show up that will enhance my image to create the feeling I wanted to capture when I took that photograph. It's like it can read your mind! That's really cool."

When any of the five Kubota Action Paks are installed, the actions are loaded into the Dashboard. The enhancements are separated into categories to walk the user through the various stages of after-capture image perfection like image correction, image adjusting, retouching, tweaking, interpolation, sharpening and finishing. Each of Kevin's Action Paks has approximately fifty actions. As you can see, once you've loaded a few packs onto your system, the search field is invaluable to allow users to narrow the list of Actions by category or keyword.

Tutorials. Lightspeed Workflow: Kubota RAW Workflow for Lightroom 3 is a time-saving DVD tutorial that helps photographers master Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 3. This DVD takes digital photographers step-by-step through proper organization, efficient editing and enhancing, and final image presentation. In addition, Kevin shares his insider tricks that have made his workflow tutorials and hands-on workshops overwhelming successes. More than just another Lightroom manual, this interactive instructional DVD is based on a proven workflow system used daily by busy digital studios.

Kevin says, "I'm particularly excited to be able to teach photographers about the wonderful new features available to them in Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 3."

9. CREATING YOUR OWN BUZZ

IN TODAY'S MARKET, ANYONE WITH A DIGITAL CAMERA AND A WEB SITE IS A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER.

In today's market, anyone with a digital camera and a web site is a professional photographer. No matter how many years you've been in the business or how great your images are, all of this competition adds up, and you'll need to find ways to attract new clients and remind your existing ones that you're still around.

There are many great opportunities to create your own buzz (think grand opening events or web site launch parties), but you don't need a special occasion to reach out to people. Be creative and invent your own kind of party. After all, you have all of the resources at your fingertips through your new "friendors" (vendor friends) in the wedding industry.

GRAND OPENING

When we opened our retail studio, we had not one but two grand opening events. The first event was more intimate and specifically targeted at

wedding planners. Since we had made the decision to start marketing an associate photographer (whose services were less costly), we invited planners that fit both high-end and mainstream budgets. We partnered with a friendor to provide catering and another to create the custom-designed invitations we mailed. The guest list was limited to twenty-five, and the atmosphere was relaxed but chic.

We classified this premier event as an exclusive sneak peak. This took off any pressure to produce a giant opening with hundreds of people, while making the invitees feel special. The soft opening allowed us to work out some of the bugs and provided us with a lot of one-on-one face time with these key vendors. Everyone got a tour, and we were able to provide an upscale experience thanks to the smaller numbers. Since both the caterer and invitation company wanted exposure with these same vendors, the only cost to us was creating custom media kits and the time it took to plan the actual event.

A few weeks later, we hosted a huge grand opening party for everyone in our local wedding community. We invited our existing clients to come earlier and the vendors to arrive after they left. We had over three hundred guests in attendance throughout the night. For the client appreciation party, we traded services with a caterer and were able to put out a tasty spread of hors d'oeuvres and dessert. We hired a few friends to tend bar and purchased the liquor at a discount store. *(Note:* If you plan to serve alcohol, be sure that you have host liability insurance.) A DJ friendor provided the tunes, and we partied until 3:00AM. Both events were a huge success, and both were necessary to achieve different buzz goals of announcing our arrival.

There's an App for That!

The Wedding Photographer's Field Guide provides posing before-and-after shots (along with metadata), lighting techniques, hot tips, and even an inspirational image gallery—all on your iPhone. Go to www.damontucci.com for more information.

E-MAIL BLASTS AND E-MAIL NEWSLETTERS

E-mail marketing is a great, low-cost form of direct marketing. Executed properly, with planning and quality content, it can improve your business by increasing sales, creating brand awareness, and retaining current customers. However, it is important to realize the difference between an e-mail blast and an e-mail newsletter. While both types of communication are done electronically, via e-mail, their content and intended goals are very different.

An e-mail blast entails sending out a single e-mail to a large group of recipients. Each day we all receive several messages like this our in spam, junk, and inboxes. Usually the short e-mail notifies you of a sale or special announcement that the business is currently pushing. Typically, the subject line is catchy, and the e-mail contains pictures and a link guiding the recipient back to the main web site. We have utilized this type of communication when reaching out to members on mailing lists that have been

provided to us by our advertising partners (e.g., a magazine or bridal show that has captured massive amounts of client data). Due to current anti-spamming laws these organizations are required by law to obtain a recipient's permission before adding them to their subscriber list. These types of messages are usually applied toward a specific promotion such as an Easter family portrait special or discounted wedding packages in the off-season. E-mail blasts do little to build relationships or to earn the client's trust. It is, at best, a reminder, and it can usually generate some click-through visits to your web site.

E-mail newsletters, on the other hand, focus mainly on strengthening client relations that hopefully will generate more business. The goal here is to provide useful information through a stylish, visually appealing and cohesive e-mail campaign. These messages will have a certain quality content, not just sales information. Your list will typically come from past and current clients and anyone who has willingly signed up for your newsletter. Specific e-mail newsletters within the campaign are sent in a timely manner with content that is tailored to the subscriber list.

We send quarterly e-mail newsletters to our clients. Because we only take on thirty clients a year and develop such a close relationship with them, we do not want our messages to be all business. Most of our clients have seen pictures of Tyler (Damon's little girl) or met our dog Zeke during the interview, so we feel it is appropriate to mention them from time to time. We also include information about new products (e.g., albums or print options), photography tips, general news about us, and a note of thanks for their continued support. We keep our correspondence short so the recipient will actually read or scan through the message, and we incorporate a few great pictures to get their attention.

We also send regular e-mail newsletters to wedding professionals. These are similar to the client newsletters, but instead of highlighting new products, we tend to focus on achievements such as awards received at print competitions and local industry news. We make it a point to highlight a few vendor names and recent weddings with some killer shots. We close with a thank you and remind the vendors that, if we can be of assistance, our door is always open and we look forward to our continued partnership.

Exposure Business Solutions' DVDs

Rosena's consulation business offers five outstanding DVDs that can help any studio owner maximize their visibility and sales:

- *Unique Marketing Strategies (shown above)*
- *The 7 in 7 Mythology*
- *Bridal Show Marketing*
- *The Friendor Approach*
- *ROI Mock Photo Shoot*

CHARITY EVENTS

One of the biggest perks of having a retail space was that it provided an area to host all kinds of unique events. Over the summer, which is a slower time for weddings in Florida, we produced a shoot similar to Vicki Taufer's V-Gallery's Dog Days of Summer. We scheduled forty-two pet sessions over the course of a weekend. The cost was $35 plus a large bag of dog food and included a 5x7-inch print. The food was donated to a local rescue

Every Dog has it's Day...
that day is September 13th.
Finally, couture pet photography that captures the true personality of your little loved one.
Join us on 9/13 for couture pet sessions that benefit "Buddies for Life". Session are only $35 plus a donation of dog food and include a 5"x7" print.

Date: 9-13-08
Time: 9am - 4pm
Cost: $35+ 30lbs bag of dog
Location: Damon Tucci Studios
1221 n. Mills Ave.
Orlando, Fl 32801
407.835.7879
$35 session fee is due at booking. Sessions are available on a first come first serve basis and limited to 20. Please bring favorite toy and treats. Sessions are 10 minutes and include online proofs and 5"x7"
Buddies for Life, Inc. is a nonprofit organization that began in 2003 for the purpose of raising public awareness about the tragedy of pet overpopulation and the importance of spay/neuter. If you are interested in having a free humane education presentation for your class or civic group (all grades and ages) or adopting a dog/puppy, please e-mail Patti at FixFido@aol.com.

To celebrate the holiday season we would like to offer you a complimentary in studio family portrait session. Your session includes online proofs and a custom 5x7 art print. Just mention this card when you call 407.835.7879. Feel free to pass this on to a best friend or family member.
Best wishes for a
healthy and happy
holiday season and new year.
the tuccis
Damon, Rosy, Tyler
&
Zeke
offer expires 3/31/09

organization that in turn provided a few volunteers to help out. The sessions were held every fifteen minutes and yielded five to seven exposures. Originally, we had planned to run the event for a single day, but we sold out in less than twenty-four hours and decided to run it for the weekend. I researched local veterinarians, boarding, training, and grooming businesses and mailed them each a stack of 5x7-inch postcards. I then e-mailed our existing database of clients and vendors, which is where the bulk of our bookings came from.

We repeated the same concept at Halloween and invited kids to wear their costumes. In this case, we asked for an additional $40 to benefit the local Make a Wish Foundation. For this event, we reached out to upscale kids' boutiques and pediatricians' offices.

Thank you for participating in our first couture pet event to benefit Buddies for Life. We raised over 50 bags of quality dog food and community awareness. Zeke, Copper and Shiloh are still looking for good homes with fun parents. If you would like adopt or foster please contact Patti at fixfido@aol.com. Please spread the word.

Good news pet lovers, the couture pet gallery is ready to view.
To access all of the photos from the entire ***Buddies For Life*** event visit www.damontucci.com and select couture pets from the top tool bar.

Attached are some new products that we are offering for this event including keychains, mugs, statuettes and more. Custom items such as holiday cards and prints with text are also available. Please contact us directly if you have questions or ideas.

A Few Important Notes:
- All orders must be picked up from Damon Tucci Studios, unless you call to make special shipping arrangements. Please allow 10 days for fulfillment, you will be contacted when it arrives.
- If you are not ordering any additional products with your complimentary 5x7 print, you must email your image number directly to info@damontucci.com.
- If you are ordering additional products please include your complimentary 5x7 with your online order.
- The gallery will be posted for a limited time only.

Thank you for your continued support of Damon Tucci Studios.

P.S. Be on the look out for our Couture Kids event coming October 25th.
Please visit www.damontuccisblog.com and post your feedback about this event.

damon tucci studios

Couture Halloween Portrait Event
presented by
damon tucci
Date: Saturday October 25, 2008
Time: 8:40am - 3:20pm
Location: Damon Tucci Studios
Address: 1221 n. Mills Ave.
Orlando, FL 32803
$45 session fee, plus $25 grocery store gift card donation. Includes photography session with Damon and 5x7 art print. Kids are encouraged to wear their Halloween costume or an alternative outfit that matches their personality.
For more information contact us at 407.835.7879
or visit www.damontucciphoto.com to register.

WE REPEATED THE SAME CONCEPT AT HALLOWEEN AND INVITED KIDS TO WEAR THEIR COSTUMES.

NEW HOPE
For Kids
New Hope for Kids mission is to support children and families grieving the death of a loved one and to grant wishes to children with life-threatening illnesses in Central Florida. New Hope achieves its mission through two programs - The Center for Grieving Children and Children's Wish - which provide assistance to children and their families during some of life's most difficult challenges. Programs are available to children ages 3-18 who live in the Central Florida area.
New Hope for Kids is a tax exempt, approved 501(c)(3) organization and is registered in the state of Florida. All contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law.
Join us at Damon Tucci Studios for a special photography event to benefit New Hope For Kids. These unique sessions will feature our new available light studio, which produces Damon's signature style of dynamic color. The studio and staff will be decked out in friendly costumes to create an experience that your child is sure to enjoy!

Both events were a smashing success because we were able to spread the word to a new base of potential clients while giving back to the community. The events were surprisingly easy to facilitate, thanks to some smart preparation. We sent press releases to the appropriate media contacts and talked up the events to anyone we came in contact with. Clients had to prepay for the session and were e-mailed specific details (e.g., the importance of arriving early, where to park, and which door to enter/exit through) a week before.

WE WERE ABLE TO SPREAD THE WORD TO A NEW BASE OF POTENTIAL CLIENTS WHILE GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY.

Upon arrival, the parent or guardian was required to sign a release form giving us permission to sell or use the images as needed. As the client left, we handed out a price list and instructions on how to view their proofs. We then posted all of the images to an online gallery where the clients could order individual prints or packages. We made the image pickup a special event by beautifully displaying the images and using boutique-style packaging. Of course, we placed information about upcoming studio events inside of each package to entice clients to book future sessions.

CREATIVE EXPOSURE OPPORTUNITIES

After being in the studio for a few months, it became apparent to us that the space could be used for more than just shoots or events directly related to our business. Since most photographers don't have a fully equipped studio, we're often asked to rent out our shooting space. We figured it might be a good idea. After all, you have to pay the rent on a space whether you are using it or not.

We decided to offer our selling space to vendors who didn't have a space to use for client meetings. We set up a room with a 100-inch projection screen, modern couches, and Internet access. We had plenty of parking available. Our space was perfect for meetings, and allowing others to use

it made for a perfect opportunity to build our relationships with other vendors in our industry. Since making the decision to share our space, it's been used to host a book release party, web site and blog launch, award-winning images celebration, casual BBQ, and it's served as a meeting space. Don't be shy about opening your doors to others. Everyone you meet is a potential client or client evangelist, so the more people you know, the better.

PUBLIC RELATIONS VIA REAL WEDDINGS

The management of your public relations can make or break your business. The topic of public relations is too expansive to cover adequately in this book, but it's too important to leave out. For the purposes of this book, therefore, we'll provide a general overview and share with you some ideas that have worked for us.

In our business, public relations is just as important as image editing or even shooting, and it's important to devote the necessary time, energy, and finances to ensure that your public relations are working in your favor.

Let's begin our discussion on public relations by comparing it to advertising.

Advertising is a form of self-promotion that is typically paid for by the marketer. The message is usually delivered to a mass audience and is not considered to be very personal. The goal of this type of one-way communication is to persuade the viewer to purchase a specific product or service.

According to Wikipedia, public relations is the practice of managing the flow of information between an organization and its public. Public relations gains an organization or individual exposure to their audiences using topics of public interest

As Seen In..
Damon Tucci Photography is frequently featured in national media including the industry and wedding magazines below as well as television appearances. To see recent weddings and read the full articles, please visit www.damontuccisblog.com.
The wedding story of UK soccer star Liam Rosenior and his bride Erica. Featured by Destination I Do magazine.
Damon discusses the low light capabilities of his new Nikon D3X and D700 cameras in the 2009 Nikon Wedding Edge.
The celebrity wedding story of Backstreet Boy Howie D and his longtime girlfriend Leigh Boniello in Orlando, Florida. Featured by InStyle Weddings magazine.
Destination wedding story of Hope and Jacob in the Florida Keys. Featured by Destination Weddings and Honeymoons magazine.
damon tucci
PHOTOGRAPHY
damontucci.com - 407.835.7879

Weddings Unveiled

The Ultimate New Year

Darnita S. Trower &
James Bryant Liptrot

December 31, 2006

Champagne flowed, fireworks sparked, and laughter filled the air on New Years Eve 2006, as Darnita and James rang in the new year as husband and wife.

Darnita first encountered the irresistible charm of James while on an extended business trip to Philadelphia. An unexpected love flourished between them proving that distance from Sacramento, Darnita's home, and Philadelphia would be to be too great for either to endure. In an effort to start a new life together, they both relocated to the sunshine of Orlando, and the rest is history.

By: Amy Thompson
Photography by: Damon Tucci

James proposed on Christmas of 2005, and with a flash, the planning began. Darnita and James wanted their wedding to be one big party, where family and friends from all over the country could share in their excitement and happiness. New Year's Eve incorporated it all and allowed for family and friends to spend some vacation time in the Orlando area.

Darnita wanted her ceremony to feel elegant and classic. With the help of the design team from Flourish, the Citrus Club was transformed with draping linens, creating the ceremony of Darnita's dreams. For Darnita's wedding, she put great importance on every element being connected by a central theme. Woven throughout everything from the invitations to the cake, was a unique design created for Darnita and James by Dragonfly Custom Design.

With a kiss and a jump over the broom, Darnita went behind the scenes for a dress change and came back to a party atmosphere. The draping linens came down and the windows overlooking the Orlando skyline were exposed. The entire room had a feeling of an elite night club; suitable for a South Beach New Years, with a splash of elegance.

Darnita and James danced the night away through a whirlwind of happiness and excitement. When asked about her favorite part of the evening, Darnita had only one thing to say, "All I remember is that I partied, it was New Year's Eve and everything was perfect!"

Perfection continued on their honeymoon to Cancun, Mexico, where Darnita and James spent countless moments basking in the happiness of simply being together.

Darnita and James' Wedding Vendor List

Ceremony & Reception: The Citrus Club
Event Design & Coordination: E Events
Floral Design & Décor: Flourish Floral Productions
Hair & Makeup: Dale Dyer
Officiant: Reverend Randal Miller
Photography: Damon Tucci
Videography: Perfect Sky Productions
Ceremony Music: Thom Chambers - Saxophone
Reception Music: DJ Carl
Linen: BBJ Linen
Invitations/Specialty Paper: Dragonfly Custom Design
Wedding Night Hotel &
Guest Accommodations: Grand Bohemian

Reprinted courtesy of *Central Florida Bride* magazine.

and news items that do not require direct payment. Because public relations creates exposure in credible third-party outlets, it offers a legitimacy that advertising does not have.

BASICALLY, YOU WANT TO SUBMIT STORIES WITH IMAGES THAT MATCH WHAT'S ALREADY IN PRINT.

The easiest and most effective way for a photographer to harness the power of public relations is through the publication of real wedding images and stock images. Look at any wedding magazine or web site and you will see feature stories about real couples. At the front and center are the images provided by the bride or photographer.

Take a Systematic Approach. I try to take a systematic approach when submitting wedding images to be featured in a magazine (print or online). Start by visiting a national bookstore like Barnes and Noble. They have a huge newsstand section that sells both national and regional magazines. Look through the magazines that catch your eye and spend some time reading the editor's letter and masthead. Each magazine caters to a specific market, and you can usually figure out what that is by reading these pages and studying the articles or features. Look for the specifics of each featured wedding. Do they take place in a dark ballroom or a fresh outdoor setting? Are the images showcased artistic shots of the bride and groom or mostly details? Basically, you want to submit stories with images that match what's already in print.

Most magazines will have specific submission guidelines. This information can usually be found on the publisher's web site. It is imperative that you follow their requirements, because most photo editors won't consider your submission if it's not complete.

Once I have solid images from a wedding that I think is feature worthy, I take these steps to get them published:

1. During the editing process, we pay special attention to images that we think showcase our studio style and will help to sell the story. We spend a little extra time polishing room shots and details so they are all ready to go.
2. We then create a hit list of magazines that will likely be interested in our images and will provide us with maximum exposure. We match their criteria based on previous research. For example, *Modern Brides* tends to showcase light, fresh wedding images made in unusual outdoor settings rather than in dark-colored ballrooms. We also consider the magazine's circulation. Some regional or destination magazines publish quarterly and are distributed to a smaller viewer base than the national publications.
3. We prepare a comprehensive package that meets the magazine's or publisher's submission guidelines. Sometimes that means a disc of high and low-res images with contact sheets. Other times, it also includes a questionnaire with vendor contact information and the password to their online proofs. Whatever the details, it is important to follow the guidelines exactly as requested.
4. We only send out images to one magazine at a time in order to prevent two parties being interested. I usually wait a month or so (depending on their deadlines) to do a follow up. If I haven't heard anything, I move on to my next option.

WE PREPARE A COMPREHENSIVE PACKAGE THAT MEETS THE MAGAZINE'S OR PUBLISHER'S SUBMISSION GUIDELINES.

This process won't guarantee that you'll get a story published. That depends on other factors, like what other submissions were received, the time of year, etc. However, taking the steps outlined above does provide you with a targeted approach that ensures you won't waste resources by reaching out to the wrong magazines.

Reaching Out to Photo Editors. Reaching out to photo editors and publishers can seem like a daunting task. More often than not, they are not located in the

thelastword

By Kim Brady

DAMON TUCCI: Juxtaposition in White

This image was created during one of Damon Tucci's Tuccisography workshops (www.damontucci.com) in downtown Orlando, FL. The exercise was to make something out of nothing or to use an object in your environment to your advantage. While some may see only a bride sitting on a rusty staircase in a city alley, Damon saw an interesting juxtaposition.

You probably don't want to convince your client to trash her $10,000 Vera Wang gown for a photo shoot, but you can expand your portfolio fairly easily with an off-the-rack wedding dress. Damon bought this dress at David's Bridal for $99 and used it on several shoots with different photographers. It's a size 8, so it can fit a variety of models—a set of clamps in the back holds it snuggly on the model. When it gets dirty, Damon simply takes it to a laundromat and washes it in Woolite. One dress lasts about four shoots.

The bride in this image is a very photogenic model named Summer Posey. While some photographers take issue with shooting a model instead of a real bride, Damon does not. He always tells prospective clients which portraits are real and which are modeled shoots. It just so happens that Summer has since asked Damon to photograph her own wedding.

If you have something in your head that's just dying to come out—make it happen! You may win a new client because she wants a portrait just like the one in your portfolio. Several of Damon's clients purchased less expensive dresses especially for their "grunge" portrait shoots.

Damon captured this image with a Nikon D3 Digital SLR and AF Nikkor 85mm f/1.4D IF lens, using a 1/500 second exposure at f/8. Illumination was available light and the silver side of a Photoflex 52-inch White/Silver LiteDisc. He fine-tuned the image in Adobe Photoshop—burning in the edges, retouching and enhancing Summer's eyes.

Kim Brady has been a writer and editor in the photo-imaging market for more than 28 years. She was editor of the first digital imaging magazine, Photo Electronic Imaging (PEI), and executive editor of The Professional Photographer. The Atlanta-based writer continues to write for imaging magazines and websites around the world.

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Reprinted courtesy of Rangefinder Publishing Company.

same city or even state that you are, and they have never heard of your studio. They are all very busy and adhere to publishing industry standards that most of us are not familiar with. So, unless you have specific public relations representation, you can't just pick up the phone and call to introduce yourself.

What you can do is be creative and persistent. The editor deals with hundreds of photographers, and it's okay to stand out, but don't be pushy. It's always better to be polite and ask if you can send them more information than to demand that they publish your work.

IT DOESN'T HURT TO USE A CREATIVE BUT TASTEFUL WAY TO STAND OUT IN THE EDITOR'S EYES.

It doesn't hurt to use a creative but tasteful way to stand out in the editor's eyes. Convinced that we had images that were well suited to a few key publications, we sent a unique package on St. Patty's Day that did not contain a single photo. (We chose this holiday because it was fun and often overlooked. We expected that most people would send a holiday card or even Valentine, since we are in the love business, so the chances of our material getting lost in the shuffle would be greater.) We wanted to make sure the package was large enough to stand out from the regular mail. The box and postage cost a few extra bucks, but it was well worth the price in the end.

Because St. Patty's Day is a happy-go-lucky occasion, we wanted to send something unexpected and memorable. We partnered with Van Gogh vodka and a chef friend to create a Leprechaun-tini recipe. Included in the box was a giant green Leprechaun hat, recipe card, logoed martini glass, and all of the ingredients to make the cocktail. Inside was a small note asking them to consider Damon Tucci Photography for their stock and real wedding needs as well as a note stating that we'd follow up with them at a later time.

A week later, we called all of the recipients just to chat and ask if we could send a complete media kit. Each time, we confirmed that we were speaking to the intended recipient and that all of the contact information we'd gathered for the editor was correct. Everyone who received the box was thrilled and knew exactly who we were by the time of the follow up. During our short conversation, we made sure to ask the recipient what their photography needs were and the specifics of submissions. The total cost for this marketing initiative was about $35 per box, and it has yielded several ongoing relationships as well as featured images.

10. ROSENA'S WEDDING MARKETING

KEEP IN MIND THAT NO ONE KNOWS HOW TO SHOWCASE YOUR PHOTOS BETTER THAN YOU.

It's easy to get overwhelmed when figuring out the right way to market your wedding photography business. As a small business owner, your time is extremely valuable and should not be wasted on fruitless marketing efforts. I calculate that we spend approximately 70 percent of our resources on marketing to other wedding professionals and 30 percent marketing directly to brides. Naturally, there will be some efforts that benefit both areas (e.g., providing images from events to vendor partners, who in turn showcase them directly to clients).

Although it sounds cliché, I always try to think about the big picture. Where will these photos end up and how will they be displayed? Keep in mind that no one knows how to showcase your photos better than you. Take the extra time to make sure they are properly color corrected, resized appropriately, and be sure to include your photo credit. Do not depend on the vendor or client to do this for you. Although they have good inten-

tions, they lack the knowledge and tools to properly adjust your images—*trust me*.

70 PERCENT VENDORS

I prefer to target the better part of our marketing efforts toward vendors because, ideally, these relationships will yield many qualified referrals over the course of several years. Establishing this relationship with vendors who share your business philosophies and goals can also help you reach your desired client demographic.

LIKE ANY IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIP, THE VENDOR–PHOTOGRAPHER RELATIONSHIP REQUIRES LOVE AND ATTENTION.

Like any important relationship, the vendor–photographer relationship requires love and attention. In order to sustain your relationship, you must be selective about the vendors you choose to work with and deliver on everything you promise. You don't want to be just another photographer on their list, you want to be *the* photographer that they point to.

Once you've established a trusting relationship with other vendors, you'll begin to build your professional reputation. Because the wedding industry is such a tight-knit community, word travels fast—good or bad.

Establishing your relationship is as easy as 1-2-3:

1. Identify key vendor partners. Start by doing your research online. Visit each potential partner's web site and blog to scrutinize the

examples of their work. Read their bios and look closely to see whom they work with. There is usually some kind of photo credit or mention of the vendors involved in each event. Home in on vendors who portray the quality of work you want to be associated with. Be sure to Google anyone that you want to get to know better. You will be surprised by how much people disclose online.

Once you have identified key vendors, you can make contact by attending local association and networking meetings, as well as wedding magazine parties. (I've included a list of national associations and magazines to consider here.) These meetings provide an opportunity to meet several people at once, but beware this is no place to start talking specifics. It is usually very loud and, just like you, most people want to mingle. If you corner someone for more than a few minutes, they will feel like a hostage, so just exchange cards and ask if you can contact them at a later date. Make sure to follow through on what you offer because in a few days they will be off to the next event and forget.

2. You can also try a more grassroots approach by contacting vendors individually. This takes a bit more preparation because, instead of a room full of vendors, you will be the focus. Try to be creative with your approach. Most of the planners and DOCs (Directors of Catering) you are looking to meet are being bombarded by vendors. Try to imagine what they will be doing when they receive your package, phone call, or e-mail. They are very busy, so if you are lucky, you will have a few seconds to get their attention. Your initial contact should be subtle and create the opportunity for you to send more information or set up a face-to-face meeting.
3. Now that you have done the hard part—initiated contact—all you have to do is maintain the relationship. This can be a lengthy process, so be patient. Chances are you will not get an immediate referral, but you still need to reach out from time to time. I will send flowers on birthdays or call just to chat. Eventually, the opportunity to win a referral will arise, and by that time you will be old friends.

Resources

Association of Bridal Consultants (ABC)
www.bridalassn.com

International Special Events Society (ISES)
www.ises.com

Meeting Professionals International (MPI)
www.mpiweb.org

National Association of Catering Executives (NACE)
www.nace.net

The Knot
www.theknot.com

Perfect Wedding Guide (PWG)
www.pwg.com

Everyone Wants What You Have. Photographers are in a unique position to establish relationships with other vendors because all the other vendors want images that showcase their products or services. Keep this in mind when you are shooting. Take establishing shots of the venue and photograph the details throughout the day.

Once I've captured the images, I make them available for all of the vendors to see and let them know that we are happy to share. If there is a specific vendor I want to impress, I pull a few images that I know they will love

and send them within days of the event. The day after the wedding, we post ten to twelve images on our blog and Facebook. I tag the files with as many contacts as possible because all of the friends of a tagged person will be able to see the pictures.

Ask your key vendors how they will use your images. Will they display them as wall prints in their selling space, present the images on a computer or flat screen, or create albums that will sit in a waiting area? Asking such questions will get you more face time, provide insight into what the vendor does, and ensure that you don't waste your resources on something they won't use. Once you've determined the vendor's image needs, stop by to hang your photograph on the wall for them (if applicable). This way, you can influence where it goes and ensure they have one less thing to do.

The Preferred Vendor List. This list does not include trendy clubs or private schools. Rather, it's the high-powered coordinator or hotelier's go-to list—and it's your all-access pass to qualified referrals.

Just about every wedding venue's management has a list of vendors they have worked with in the past and can vouch for. The list makes their lives easier, because the management has built a level of trust with these folks, and the vendors have an understanding of what is expected of them when they are working on the property. There are usually several options for vendors in every category, and everyone creates their list differently.

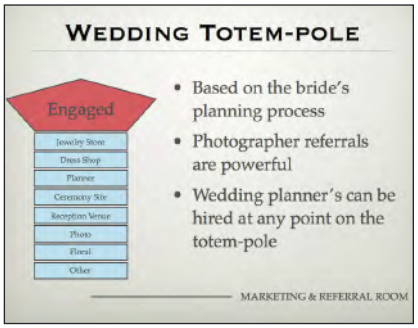
Hopefully, the points addressed in this chapter will help you to end up on the preferred vendor lists of other industry pros. When you make your own list, be sure it is comprised of vendors who can give you qualified leads—specifically those who come before you on the wedding totem pole.

Your Referrals. As a photographer, you are a part of the wedding totem pole and, as such, you have the ability to pass on plenty of referrals. In fact, your referral is just as important as one from a planner or venue. During the course of our sales appointment, I always ask my clients which vendors they are working with or considering. It helps me relate to them and gives me a better idea of what the overall event will be like. It can also be an indication of the size of the client's budget. If there are categories that they need help in, I offer up a few names. If it was a solid referral (meaning that I think the client will call the vendor), I let that vendor know ahead of time. I try to select vendors who are a good match for my client and vendors who refer us. Thus, the network is formed.

Networking 101. We're all familiar with the saying, "It's not what you know, it's who you know." In the wedding industry, these words could not be more true. Because networking can sometimes require a sizable time investment, it's critical that you have a strategy that plays into your overall marketing plan. As the owner of a small business, you are not only the talent but the face of the company, so your personal and professional

The Wedding Totem Pole

Understanding where you fall on the wedding totem pole is key when designing a market strategy. The graphic below outlines the bride's planning process. Of course, the list may vary from one bride to the next.



THE LIST

I recently had the opportunity to talk with the Director of Catering for a new local hotel. I asked her about the hotel's list and asked if she had any advice for anyone actively pursuing a relationship with a person in her position. My questions and her candid answers appear below.

Please tell me about your experience in the wedding industry.
I have spent twenty years in hospitality and ten years in the wedding industry.

Please tell us about your preferred vendor list. (How many vendors are on it? How often it is updated? How is it circulated? Is it the same for social and corporate?)
It's important to preface that each hotel creates their list according to their needs. My list has no specific cap because some categories, such as entertainment, require a lot of different options. This is typically the case, unless there is a contractual agreement for exclusivity. The list is updated as often as needed—sometimes that's every three months, sometimes it's once a year. Usually there are separate vendor lists for corporate and social clients.

I consider our list a valuable resource, and it is provided to the client at the contract signing.

A destination management company typically handles corporate events, and it's their job to pull together all of the other vendors needed. Brides, on the other hand, usually make the decisions themselves after researching the recommended vendors. In regards to circulation, I don't just give the list to everyone who inquires about the property. I consider our list a valuable resource, and it is provided to the client at the contract signing. Of course, if they do ask about it beforehand, I am happy to pass it along, but only to qualified leads.

Why are preferred vendors important to you?
I consider the vendors on my list partners and an extension of my staff. They are great to work with because I know they will uphold the high standards of the property and are familiar with our policies. A great example of this is having liability insurance, which is a requirement for everyone on the list. The other factor is trust. I am confident that they will take good care of my clients and be able to work as a team with my staff.

What do you look for in a preferred vendor?
A solid reputation, quality work, and passion for what they do.

What is the best and worst way to approach you about being a photographer on your preferred vendor list?
Ideally, just politely asking if you can send me some information about you is the first step. Then you can tell me how you are different and show me why you are qualified to be a preferred vendor. Basically, I need you to educate me on who you are and what you do. If it comes from a genuine place and you have put some thought into your presentation, it will stand out. If you just photocopy some old material and stick it in the mail, it probably won't get my attention.

How can a preferred vendor stand out from others on the list in the same category?
A great starting point can be through volunteering to document an event. This way, I can see firsthand how you operate and I can gauge the quality of your work.

relationships will be inextricably linked. Your ability to network with other wedding professionals will dramatically influence your bookings, so even if you don't consider yourself a people person, it's time to bite the bullet and start talking.

Successful networking starts long before you leave the house, and it requires a bit of preparation. Follow these easy steps to maximize your results with minimal investment.

1. Select appropriate events where you can meet people who can positively impact your business. Be picky and research upcoming events online. Also, be sure to ask other vendors about past events so you can identify the meetings that will meet your needs.
2. Prepare yourself by determining which vendors you need to meet. Visit their web site and blogs before attending. Bring plenty of cards or "pocket sales collateral" to hand out.
3. Be a conversation starter or ask a colleague to make specific introductions to your target vendors. Use the information you gathered via your online research to start an intriguing conversation, and make it a point to ask open-ended questions. Be a good listener.
4. Keep conversations light and short. Close by exchanging cards, and let the vendor know that you would appreciate the opportunity to get together again soon.
5. Add your new contact to your database and send a thank you e-mail the following day. If this is a key vendor, request a lunch meeting to further discuss the possibility of working together, and be sure to schedule the meeting as soon as possible.

Tips for Networking Success

- Don't commit yourself to too many events.
- Always carry cards. Spontaneous networking can happen anywhere.
- If you can't find a local club with ideal interests, start one.
- Don't be shy. Everyone else is there to network with you as much as you are with them.
- Smile! It will you make you more approachable.
- Maintain your new contacts through your social media tools.

30 PERCENT BRIDES

Once you've connected with industry vendors and have made it onto their preferred referral lists, you'll need to turn your attention to marketing directly to brides. If your vendor marketing is working effectively, you should only need to devote about 30 percent of your marketing focus to your prospective clients—brides.

Marketing to brides is much like marketing to vendors, only with vendors, you're marketing to the same people over and over—and the wedding industry is a tight-knit community, so word (both good and bad) gets around quickly. With brides, you are generally starting fresh with each new client (unless, for instance, a former bride's sister arrives at your studio and wants to hire you because her sister had a great experience).

There are many effective ways to reach brides-to-be and entice them to hire you to photograph their wedding. Some of the more effective avenues are described on the following pages.

Print Advertising. Once you have reached a point in your business where you are ready to advertise, purchasing print ads may be the way to go. Print advertising is one of the best ways to announce your arrival. It gets you in front of a large audience and bolsters credibility. This type of advertising is expensive, so do your homework on what's out there and have an overall marketing strategy in place. You will need to consider who your target market is and then find the best way to reach them.

Start by requesting media kits from the staff of all of the magazines you are interested in advertising in. Make sure that the publication's targeted demographic is in line with yours. The best ad in the wrong magazine will still generate no business. Compare prices and determine what is included. For example, determine who is creating the ad and at what cost. You'll also want to figure out where the ad will be placed and whether an online listing will be included.

When pursuing a print ad, your sales rep will be a valuable resource. Don't be afraid to ask them what ads have worked well in the past. You can also ask them to offer any tips they have on how to make the most of your advertising dollars.

START BY REQUESTING MEDIA KITS FROM THE STAFF OF ALL OF THE MAGAZINES YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING IN.

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Do

Social Networking Makes Sense

It is highly recommended that you incorporate social media networking into your weekly schedule. Consider a schedule that includes a weekly blog entry, biweekly Facebook status update, and a daily tweet (Twitter update). This way, you can be sure that your posts and tweets are current and pertinent, without spending excessive time on those tasks.

Social Media. Social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter allow you to reach out to new people via your existing relationships. This person-to-person marketing necessitates using a voice that is different from the one typically employed in traditional marketing. It's similar to blogging in that you should speak directly to the end user in a very casual tone. The

message you should strive to send is more like, "Hey, this is a shot from a cool wedding that we just did. I really think you'll like it," than "Look at me! I'm so great! You should choose me to shoot your wedding."

These outlets allow anyone who is interested to get updates and learn about your work without ever meeting face to face. Keep in mind, though, that advertising via social media is a slow-moving process that requires patience and consistent attention.

It's not really clear yet what the return on investment (the investment being time, rather than money) is on social media marketing, so be careful not to spend every waking moment updating your profile. Take a genuine approach and you will form relationships organically.

Web Site and Blog. Having a web site is just like having a business card. It is a must, and you should always keep it current. That said, you must also realize that you cannot commit all of your time or resources to trying to create the perfect site. It is an evolutionary process that will

require frequent content updates, and as technology changes, you'll need to incorporate new bells and whistles.

Everything on your site should be accessible in one or two clicks. If anything more than that is required to interact with your site, visitors will get bored. Your site should showcase only your best work. Remember, less is more because viewers are looking for images that they like as well as images that they don't. Three awesome shots are better than thirty mediocre ones.

If you have the know-how, you can create your own web site from scratch and update it as you choose. I personally believe that our time is best spent behind the camera, so we made the decision to work with Livebooks (www.livebooks.com), a company that caters to photographers.

Before we began using Livebooks, our site was managed by some guy who took months to complete simple updates. Livebooks was created specifically for photographers and offers a unique, fully customizable flash-based web site that includes built-in search engine optimization. Another great option to consider is www.bludomain.com, which offers less expensive templates that can be easily tailored, albeit with less customization.

The other online tool that makes a huge impact on our virtual presence is the blog. You can set up a simple blog for free on www.blogspot.com or www.wordpress.com, but remember you get what you pay for. Last year, we purchased a blog skin from www.prophotoblogs.com for $225, and it's amazing. You can easily add third-party plug-ins that can increase your blog's search engine optimization and allow your site greater exposure. There is a science behind search engine optimization, and I highly recommend getting online and doing research about how to get your web site and blog more traffic.

Be sure to include only your best work on your web site and blog. Remember, quality is a much better option than quantity. Take the time to polish anything you post to your online portfolio, and always keep your blog current. Add a new thought-provoking post at least once a week.

Bridal Shows. Bridal shows can be an excellent resource for finding newly engaged brides who need your photography services. However, make sure you take the time to research the show, plan your booth strategy, and follow up with potential clients to ensure maximum return on your investment. This direct marketing strategy can quickly become very expensive, and you may quickly exhaust precious resources that could have been utilized elsewhere, so plan accordingly.

Bridal show marketing starts with finding the right show for your business. Nowadays, there are many options that cater to different segments of the wedding market. Begin by checking the industry associations and local wedding organizations that you belong to. Oftentimes, members will receive advantages that are not offered to nonmembers such as priority en-

Bridal Show Do's

- Do research potential bridal shows thoroughly.
- Do visit potential shows prior to committing.
- Do execute your follow-up strategy prior to the show.
- Do engage in pre-show marketing activities.
- Do design a booth that invites guests to stay a while.
- Do educate your staff prior to the show.
- Do network with other vendors.
- Do follow up with serious prospects within 24 hours after the show.

Bridal Show Dont's

- Don't book the first show you hear about.
- Don't wait until the last minute to book your booth.
- Don't clutter your booth with unnecessary items.
- Don't display old, outdated work.
- Don't disappear from your booth during show hours.
- Don't separate yourself (and staff) from brides by putting a table out in front of the booth.
- Don't procrastinate when it comes to following up.

rollment, discounted booth rates, better booth placement, or special upgrade options. You can also do a Google search for bridal shows in your target area and ask other vendors for referrals.

Once you have isolated a few shows that seem ideal, request a media kit that provides information about the company organizing the show and the show itself. Make sure their target market is in line with yours. Find out what other vendors are participating, review their marketing strategies, and ascertain exactly what is included in the cost of your booth rental. Typically, you can expect draping, a small sign in the booth, a table, two chairs, a listing in the show directory, access to show leads, and a web site link. Power, Internet, and the opportunity to put a brochure into the swag bag is normally available as an upgrade. Be sure to ask how the booths are assigned, and have the representative write exactly where your booth will be located and what is included on the contract. If possible, try to preview the show to get a feel for the organization and attendance before committing.

Once you have signed your contract, create a bridal show strategy that fits with your overall business marketing plan. Start your preparation early and include the following in your strategy: a follow-up plan, pre-show marketing, booth design, marketing materials, and execution for showtime.

Although it may sound backwards, start by designing your follow-up materials. Most likely, you will be sending out an e-mail blast to the show's lead list or mailing a postcard. Design your e-mail and order your postcards prior to the show so all you have to do is send them out once you receive the list. Design your follow-up materials to match the rest of your show handouts and booth. Keep in mind that you will be swamped from preparing for the show and tired from working it, so get this out of the way first.

Your pre-show marketing materials can include e-mail blasts, Facebook and blog posts, and tweets (Twitter updates). You can also place postcards

three

at important points of contact. They should all have a cohesive message and look that perpetuates your brand. Consider including a specific offer that is available only at the show. Additionally, make sure your blog, web site, and other marketing materials are up to date. As soon as your link from the bridal show web site is live, potential clients could be reviewing your services, so don't wait until the last minute.

Both the location and design of your booth are key factors in your success. Ideally you want to be located in a high traffic area, away from your primary competitors. Hopefully, the event doesn't have too many distractions (such as a fashion show in the same room as the booths or loud announcements over the PA system) that may inhibit your ability to sell. When designing your booth, try to create a comfortable and inviting space that encourages potential clients to stay awhile. Avoid using a table or other barriers that separate you from the client. Instead, consider having a lounge-style setup or a horseshoe-shaped arrangement that invites guests to come into your space.

IDEALLY YOU WANT TO BE LOCATED IN A HIGH TRAFFIC AREA, AWAY FROM YOUR PRIMARY COMPETITORS.

Make sure the entire booth is organized, and place important marketing materials within easy reach. Use larger prints that can make a lasting impact, and bring albums and proof books that represent your current work. If you are using a slide show, make sure the screen is large enough to see from a distance and place in at eye level. Make sure it can be looped, don't

use music, and realize that the presentation will be pointless if there's a harsh glare over the screen.

Prior to the event, educate your staff about your products, services, and show specials. Request a professional dress code that suits your brand. Bring your calendar and prepare a few press kits for serious inquiries. After your booth is set up, take a few minutes to pump up your staff to get everyone in the mind frame of being on stage. Give them specific phrases to use when describing you and your services that support the brand. Position your employees and booth staff at the front and ask them to approach brides with a smile and invite them into your booth. If you are offering a promotion, have your staff use that information as an opening line when meeting clients, and utilize it as a way to capture vital client information. Ask that only serious prospects be passed on to you in a designated area of the booth that has been specifically designed for this purpose. It will be a long day, so get a good night's rest and make sure everyone has breakfast.

ONCE YOU HAVE PACKED UP YOUR BOOTH, EXECUTE YOUR POST-SHOW FOLLOW-UP PLAN IMMEDIATELY.

Once the show has started, you probably won't have much downtime. So, make sure you arrive early, set up efficiently, and make time before the show to walk around. Take note of which booths grab your attention, and consider their features when planning for future efforts. Make it a point to network with other vendors who could be potential friendors. Introduce yourself and exchange cards. Now is not the time to chat, but make a great, friendly impression so that when you contact them after the show they will remember you. If you do have downtime, clean up and restock your materials. Ask your staff for feedback, and readjust anything that you can to increase your bookings that day.

Once you have packed up your booth, execute your post-show follow-up plan immediately. It will be a few days before the lead list is released, so use this time to get a jump on the competition by contacting your serious prospects. Add this follow-up time onto your calendar. If you drop the ball now, you will not be able to capitalize fully on this marketing strategy—or all of your hard work up to this point.

HEATHER SNIVELY: THE WEDDING PLANNER'S GUIDE TO HIRING A PHOTOGRAPHER

Heather Snively is an expert wedding planner from Weddings Unique, an Orlando-based business intent on planning, designing, and coordinating the wedding of each client's dreams. In the pages that follow, she offers important insights that will inform photographers about how to catch the attention of wedding planners—and land great weddings.

With more than fifteen years in the weddings and special events industry, I have had the opportunity to work with some of the very best professionals in the business—including gifted photographers who have the privilege of capturing everlasting memories at the affair.

As professionals with discerning clients who hire us to orchestrate momentous events during very special times of their lives, day in and day out, we live and breathe our work. We have true passion for what we do, and there is a rare and exciting opportunity for individual professionals to work together as a team. As they say, it takes a village to pull off a picture-perfect wedding!

From the perspective of a wedding planner, trust and professionalism from every vendor is imperative for assembling the team best suited for each client. And while the food may be delicious, the entertainment electric, décor breathtaking, and flowers stunning, at the end of the day, the bride, groom, and their families just want the

memories from the most wonderful day of their lives, in pictures.

Therefore, after the selection of the date and the location comes the most important referral in the planning process—hiring the wedding photographer.

Today's bride is savvy and wants the best for her budget. The Association of Bridal Consultants (ABC) recommends spending 8 to 10 percent of the overall budget on photography. Yet with glossy pictures of glamorous décor and over-the-top ceremony and reception options splashed all over the media, it is no small task to focus the bride on what will be most important in the end—photographs. I tell my clients that there are no "wedding-day do-overs" and advise them to spend wisely so that they can make the most of their budget. A good photographer will offer a range of options to meet their clients' needs.

It is also critical that the bride chooses a photographer to fit her personal preferences and the wedding style. Understanding the scope of her dream event and where all the photo opportunities will be, in addition to knowing the couple's personality—are they formal and posed? will they want you to catch them locking eyes in a private moment?—helps dictate which photographer is the best person for the job.

But before you ever meet the happy couple, you [the photographer] must have a relationship with the wedding planner so that the planner can represent you and refer your services accurately and with confidence. This begins with an effort of marketing directly to your audience of wedding planners.

Marketing to the Planners

So, what gets the planner's attention and gives her the confidence she needs to refer you among all the others? It is, quite simply, an effective web site. A web site is the first introduction to you and your work, and it must be eye-catching and interesting. If it isn't, the planner will not refer you to potential new clients, and your work will not be adequately showcased for anyone to see.

Expensive bells and whistles are not necessary, just easy navigation and personalization. My office regularly receives calls from new photographers who want to meet

and present their images. As a practice, we always ask that the photographer send a link to their web site. Unfortunately, many opportunities are missed by photographers who fail to follow through in sending anything at all.

Networking events are also a great way to introduce yourself to the community. Get out there and meet the planners in your area! Research the wedding associations and become a familiar face.

We want to hear how you define your abilities and what makes you stand apart from the competition.

Ask wedding professionals—including florists, videographers, hair and makeup artists, and planners—for an appointment to meet and show your portfolio. Do not ever drop by their office unsolicited. At scheduled meetings, bring a variety of images in an album, or better yet, on DVD. Bring a laptop so your work can be quickly and seamlessly presented for instant feedback. Come to the appointment dressed as if you are meeting a client.

The wedding planner may well be your most important client, so put your best foot forward and make it your intention to establish a professional relationship from the get go. Remember that the wedding planners are the people who will be referring you interesting and profitable work. Prepare for your meeting as if it means money.

A planner getting to know you may ask questions, such as the following:

How long have you been in business?
The length—whether the answer is five months or fifteen years—does not ensure you the referral. This question is an opportunity to let the planner see how you will present yourself to the client, how you communicate, who you are, and what your background can lend to the experience.

How would you describe your photography style?
Most photographers profess to do all styles, but in many cases, this could not be farther from the truth. Know your strengths. We want to hear how you define your abilities and what makes you stand apart from the competition.

Do you have insurance?
Insurance is a must. Most planners and many venues will not work with you in any capacity if you do not carry up-to-date insurance.

Do you have samples of work to share?
Bring what you have, even if you have not built up a large portfolio. Strangely, I had an appointment to interview a new photographer who arrived in shorts and flip-flops with no samples of photography work. Needless to say, it was a short meeting and there was no way for me to assess the photographer's ability, style, or talent—other than being sure that preparedness was not a strong suit.

Do you have a professional web site?
As discussed earlier, in today's market, a web site is critical for attracting both planners and brides to your services and showcasing your work.

Do you work with an assistant and if so how long has that assistant been with you?
Because an assistant is as important on the day of the wedding as your right hand, learning more about your assistant gives the planner an idea of who else will be involved in the day's operations, as well as how you work with others in a stressful and fast-paced environment. Share any experience or anecdotal stories that illustrate your relationship and provide insight into what your team looks like. The same applies for introducing a studio manager or other support staff you may have.

Will you guarantee to be the one shooting at the event?
A trusting relationship between a planner and photographer is essential, so be sure to divulge any potential timing conflicts. Subcontracting out events that a planner refers to you misrepresents your work to the bride *and* the planner and usually results in the termination of the relationship. Schedules do get mixed up and situations arise where creative solutions are needed, and the planner is there to work with you to find the best alternative for the client. Always communicate openly and honestly to avoid conflict.

How long before the pictures get posted online?
As with so many aspects of the wedding, timing is of the essence when it comes to viewing the day's images while the excitement is still alive. This also ensures maximum

exposure of your work because posting a selection of shots will inevitably lead to the bride and groom forwarding the link on to friends, family, and guests—who will, in turn, visit your web site. The photos don't have to be edited to perfection or retouched at this stage; it is purely an opportunity to capitalize on the eager nature of the bride and groom to relive the day in their mind as quickly as possible. I love it when my clients e-mail me from their honeymoon with praise for their pictures!

Will they have input in the album design? How does your process work?
Some clients want to do the album design work, but most do not. I suggest giving a time frame for them to get their album created. It's hard on the photographers when this process drags out over years, and clients often respond best to guidance in this area.

How long before my client gets their album?
The right answer is, "That depends on what album they choose." Be sure to offer a number of album styles and price points to meet each bride and groom's preferences.

Having the answers to these questions ready with a smile and an openness to discuss your business practices and artistic philosophies is essential. You can be a great and gifted photographer, but in the wedding business, a pleasant personality and flexibility is what seals the deal.

Developing a relationship with planners in your area is the best way to ensure success in this competitive market. With a referral from a planner, you are being sent an enthusiastic, prequalified, potential client who has already heard how fabulous you are, at no cost to you!

Cross-Marketing with the Wedding Planner
Cross marketing with wedding planners is an opportunity that is often overlooked by photographers. You will occasionally have this opportunity to refer weddings back to a preferred planner if you take it upon yourself to ask the right questions of a prospective or contracted bride. Talk to the planners you frequently partner with and ask them how best to introduce their services to your clients. It's a simple way to endear yourself to a planner for many mutual future referrals.

Likewise, when meeting with a new client, it is common to send a photographer's DVDs home with them for review. There is no better way to get your product in front of a potential client—it is inexpensive and easy to ask reputable noncompetitive vendors in your area to hand out sample DVD slide shows packaged in economical, yet eye-catching cases for engaged couples to preview.

Allowing planners or other wedding professionals to use your images or images from an event you collaborated on to feature on their own web sites or in ads and media publication of real wedding stories—with proper photo credit, of course!—is another excellent way to maximize your exposure and grow your relationship through association with other respected professionals.

Developing a relationship with planners in your area is the best way to ensure success in this competitive market.

At the same time, because plagiarism can be a big issue, a production credit to the planner and photo credit to the photographer must appear on all images that are showcased anywhere—whether they are featured on a blog, another vendor's web site, or in marketing materials. Would you use photos of a model without getting her permission? Consider the events you will photograph as the "model" created over months of work by the wedding planner and offer the same respect.

Wedding Etiquette
Long gone are the days of the traditional June wedding season and a "typical" bride and groom. Many new and interesting situations and questions are arising daily from clients as a result of the economy and the booming wedding marketplace. While some of the following imperatives may seem obvious, it is important that planners and photographers are on the same page and work together as true partners. Following these simple guidelines will ensure you are doing your part.

- Understand your role. As a planner, I generally do not attend the first meeting between you and the client. This allows you to develop your own chemistry with the bride and groom and prevents the planner from prompting or showing a bias.
- Always show up early. *Always.*

- Be in control, pleasantly guiding family and guests to get the shots you need.
- Understand delicate family issues and show sensitivity as needed.
- Be invisible as much as possible and make an attempt to stay out of guests' view during the ceremony and reception. Remember that it is your job to capture the moments, not to be a part of them.
- Wear neutral clothing that blends well, such as black pants and long-sleeved shirts. While a jacket is not required, looking professional and never flashy is a must. Female photographers should be especially careful to wear clothing that allows them to be agile without showing any skin (a body suit might be a good idea).
- Do not chew gum or wear heavy perfume/cologne. Wear deodorant, clean clothes, and neat shoes to ensure that you are not calling unnecessary attention to yourself.
- Do not use the wedding or event as an opportunity to advertise. This is not the place to act as a walking billboard. Be sure there are no company names on your clothing, equipment, or bags.
- Never bring family or friends to the job.
- If the bride sends you a five-page shot list, don't panic. Work with the planner to determine what's necessary, and remember that your client is always right.
- Communicate often and well. Make sure the bride and the planner know that you are excited about the job and that you are going to be there to do a good job, without fail.
- Read and utilize your schedule—the planner puts together a minute-by-minute timeline for good reason—so that you don't miss any special moments that need to be documented!
- Keep your phone on (set to vibrate, of course) and make sure you are accessible throughout the event and that the planner can find you easily for any reason.
- When your services by contract are complete, say good-bye to the planner. There is always a chance that you may be requested to extend your services, and if you don't let the planner know that you intend to depart, you could miss the potential to sell additional time for a party that won't stop.

Technology and Delivery

Your work can be impeccable, but if you only offer creative artistic ability and fall short in meeting the business expectations of the wedding industry, you won't go far. Combining the best in technology with a respectable delivery of your services and finished product creates a scenario where you offer planners and clients the best of both worlds.

In this day of digital photos, pictures from the ceremony can easily be shown at the reception. If this is an element the bride wants to incorporate, don't get hung up on the need to retouch the images like you would for the final presentation. Remember that while you are looking with your professional eye, the guests viewing the images are just trying to catch a glimpse of what you've captured, and it's easy to wow them.

Another great way to show off your work and help the bride share the highlights of her special day is to post their images to social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, etc.) and blogs in real time. If the client is amenable and eager, this is another great way to reach a huge audience with your images before the proofs are posted.

For the actual edited images, I always recommend delivery of online photos within a maximum of two weeks. A good photographer will take over a thousand photos from an eight-hour shoot, and it is understandable that you need time to edit and retouch. But do not allow yourself to get backed up! Once the wedding is over, the bride and groom, as well as friends and family, are counting down the minutes to receive your images, so the quicker you can deliver, the more of a hero you'll become.

Once the wedding is over, the bride and groom are counting down the minutes to receive your images.

The delivery of quality service also entails being nimble during the event and working with the planner when factors beyond our control change our plans (e.g., rain can put a damper on the day without any warning)—but you can help! Not only will you need to have alternative arrangements for taking any outdoor shots that were

scheduled, but the wedding planner may also use you creatively to create a photo montage or slide show display that can entertain or distract guests when an event is being moved from outdoors to inside.

For example, I planned a beach wedding and, as nature would have it, I had to quickly redesign and move the entire event indoors—while trying to soothe and satisfy a bride's dream vision for the day with a spin on her original fairy tale. In this scenario, photographer Damon Tucci was instrumental in organizing equipment and creating a slide show on a 9x12-foot screen for guests to view as they entered the reception room, as his assistant photographed the cocktail hour. This welcomed distraction resulted in a pleasant change of plans because instead of the guests focusing on the alternative location, they were distracted by the stunning visual images and moved by seeing the ceremony images they had just participated in. A cool head and ultimate flexibility from all parties ensures that no crisis is too large for the planner and photographer to handle as a team.

Down the road of marital bliss, the couple will often have babies and pets who need to be photographed.

Budgets, Fees, and Contracts

If the client likes the photographer's style and demeanor, the next step for the wedding planner is to request a contract for review. In addition to referring qualified professionals to clients, it is also the job of every planner to negotiate a good rate of service. While it is never the intention to interfere with a photographer's right to sell, it is imperative to ensure the numbers fall within the budget that the client desires and that all costs are divulged up front. Add-ons and fees that appear after the event has taken place are not a welcome addition and can tarnish the experience, no matter how good the photos are.

Often I am asked if I take a referral fee from photographers (or other vendors), and the answer is always a resounding no. A good planner should refer based on professionalism, skill, and your ability to document the event for their client, never for a kickback or hidden fee. It is also not the planner's role to lock a photographer into a package price. This practice discourages options and a full range of service offerings for the client, and it doesn't serve anyone's best interest. Simply ensure contracts are clear, define your fees and services up front, and make honesty your policy.

After the Honeymoon Is Over

There is tremendous opportunity for photographers to create a lifelong client relationship with a happy bride and groom. Down the road of marital bliss, the couple will often have babies and pets who need to be photographed. You may also be called on to create holiday cards, high school photos, and a lifetime of other memories. By forming long-lasting relationships and successfully shooting a wedding with beautiful results, you leave the door open for referrals and future projects with all parties involved!

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CONCLUSION

YOU HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO CONSTANTLY EDUCATE YOURSELF AND HONE YOUR SKILLS.

MOVING FORWARD

As a professional photographer, you have a responsibility to constantly educate yourself and hone your skills. There are many wonderful organizations out there that can facilitate this. WPPI (Wedding and Portrait Photographers International) and PPA (Professional Photographers of America) are two of the largest international organizations out there. They both have annual conventions and many resources that are available to new photographers. The Wedding Photojournalist Association (WPJA) are photojournalists and wedding photographers from across the country that photograph weddings in a candid manner.

Popular photographers such as JB and DeEtte Sallee and Sandy Puc travel around the country teaching. Attend their seminars and lectures; they can help your reach your artistic and financial goals.

That said, the Internet is a fabulous resource for gathering information on every conceivable topic. Browse the web sites of the photographers whose work inspires you. Immerse yourself in your passion. There are

numerous sites dedicated to all kinds of photographic topics. Digital Wedding forum (DWF) is a discussion site for professional wedding photographers. The topics presented on the site include marketing, sales, and art with digital cameras. Strobist.com is a great place to learn about lighting. Of course, there are countless other helpful sites. Let your curiosity be your guide.

Finally, Amherst Media publishes countless how-to books on every area of photography. You can turn to their web site (www.amherstmedia.com) to find numerous resources that will help you improve your art and business. You'll find a sampling of their titles represented in the final pages of this book.

MEASURING YOUR SUCCESS

There are many measures of success when you work in this field. Creating art is fulfilling. Knowing that you are documenting key moments in your clients' lives is rewarding, too. While these are clear benefits, you can never lose sight that this undertaking is a business venture, not a hobby.

YOU CAN NEVER LOSE SIGHT THAT THIS UNDERTAKING IS A BUSINESS VENTURE, NOT A HOBBY.

The best way to gauge your success in this business is to meet with your accountant (or turn to QuickBooks) and determine your bottom line at the end of the year. Numbers do not lie.

If you are having trouble managing your business, turn to one of the many lifelines that are available, such as PPA's studio management services, a local accountant, or the SBA (small business administration). Even if you don't have an MBA from Wharton, it's time to embrace your entrepreneurial side. Hopefully this book has given you some interesting strategies that will help you to do just that.

As I said in the beginning of the book, our own business approach is simple: we try to produce the best work we possibly can, and we treat our clients as we would like to be treated. When you're mindful of that philosophy, business can be a lot of fun.

Overall, it is an exciting time to be a professional photographer. The cameras that are available to us are amazing, and they get better every day. There are new and exciting opportunities to make money with these tools around every corner. You've picked a very noble profession. I hope it's as exciting for you as it is for us.

Good Luck!
Damon and Rosena

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Damon Tucci

Damon Tucci has been a professional photographer in the Orlando area for more than fifteen years and has photographed over 2500 weddings. Unlike many wedding photos from the past, his images are emotional, unique, and interesting—just like the couples he photographs.

Damon's distinctive artistry is a combination of talent and experience. He began his career as an underwater cinematographer and later worked as a photographer for Disney Photographic Services. It was at Disney that he carefully crafted his unique approach to wedding photography, which features a mix of documentary-style photography and stylized fashion shots.

Damon's nontraditional method of blending fashion with documentation is revolutionizing the wedding industry. Today's couples don't want to spend precious hours on formal poses. They want to enjoy their day with family and friends. Damon's unique understanding of light a new retail storefront, securing a allows him to capture these once-in-a-lifetime moments, but in an unobtrusive manner that does not impact the wedding.

As an artist, Damon revels in breaking the rules. He firmly believes that if you don't enjoy what you do, you should do something else. His personality is laid-back and fun. Though he is highly professional, his sense of humor is always at the ready, and that makes working with him much like spending time with an old friend.

Rosena Usmani

As founder of Exposure Business Solutions, Rosena is known for her synergistic marketing concepts. She takes great pride in producing lasting networks that stimulate growth for both the studio and their partners.

Rosena describes the photographer's role in the marketplace as the foundation when it comes to producing fabulous events. "It is essentially what takes the overall experience from Plain Jane to Platinum," she says. She believes that having this unique leverage allows photographers to promote themselves are the critical component of any production.

Rosena began her career in the wedding industry as the associate editor for a high-end wedding magazine in the Central Florida area. In 2006, she signed on as a partner and the marketing force behind Damon Tucci Studios. She is a PPA member who holds a Master of Arts degree in Corporate Communications and continues to sharpen her skills by regularly attending workshops about the business of photography.

During her time with the studio, she has been instrumental in the opening of a new retail storefront, securing a publishing contract, streamlining workflow, and increasing revenue by 35 percent through effective marketing campaigns.

Rosena says, "I strongly believe that you have to be your own cheerleader. The business of photography goes far beyond taking great pictures. You have to be savvy, sensible, and know how to self-promote."

Rosena's Consulting Business

What if you could operate a successful photography business working *less* than forty hours a week? The PPA Benchmark Survey recently reported that "high sales levels do not into good profitperformance when costs are not controlled." In other words, you need to work smarter, no harder.

Exposure Business Solutions' goal is to help you achieve a level of success that complements your artistry. Let our prepackaged business options show you time-saving ways to source quality referrals, develop a targeted sales workflow, and streamline your overall operation.

Welcome to your new life. How will you spend your time?

Rosena is available for private consultations, mentoring, and studio makeovers.

For more information, go to www.exposurebusiness.com.

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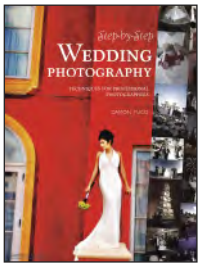


STEP-BY-STEP WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY

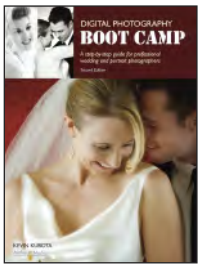
Damon Tucci

Deliver the top-quality images that your clients demand with the tips in this essential book. Tucci shows you how to become more creative, more efficient, and more successful. $34.95 list, 8.5x11, 128p, 175 color images, index, order no. 1868.

SCULPTING WITH LIGHT

Allison Earnest

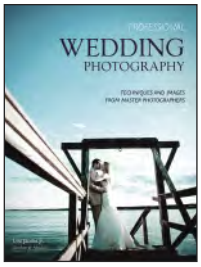
Learn how to design the lighting effect that will best flatter your subject. Studio and location lighting setups are covered in detail with an assortment of helpful variations provided for each shot. $34.95 list, 8.5x11, 128p, 175 color images, diagrams, index, order no. 1867.



DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY BOOT CAMP, 2nd Ed.

Kevin Kubota

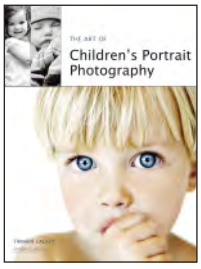
This popular book based on Kevin Kubota's sell-out workshop series is now fully updated with techniques for Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom. It's a down-and-dirty, step-by-step course for professionals! $34.95 list, 8.5x11, 128p, 220 color images, index, order no. 1873.



PROFESSIONAL WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY

Lou Jacobs Jr.

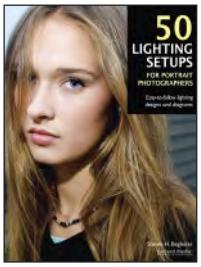
Jacobs explores techniques and images from over a dozen top professional wedding photographers in this revealing book, taking you behind the scenes and into the minds of the masters. $34.95 list, 8.5x11, 128p, 175 color images, index, order no. 2004.



THE ART OF CHILDREN'S PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY

Tamara Lackey

Learn how to create images that are focused on emotion, relationships, and storytelling. Lackey shows you how to engage children, conduct fun and efficient sessions, and deliver images that parents will cherish. $34.95 list, 8.5x11, 128p, 240 color images, index, order no. 1870.



50 LIGHTING SETUPS FOR PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHERS

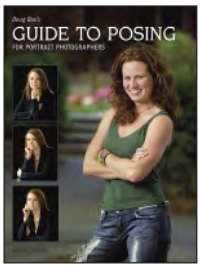
Steven H. Begleiter

Filled with unique portraits and lighting diagrams, plus the "recipe" for creating each one, this book is an indispensible resource you'll rely on for a wide range of portrait situations and subjects. $34.95 list, 8.5x11, 128p, 150 color images and diagrams, index, order no. 1872.

100 TECHNIQUES FOR PROFESSIONAL WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Bill Hurter

Top photographers provide tips for becoming a better shooter—from optimizing your gear, to capturing perfect moments, to streamlining your workflow. $34.95 list, 8.5x11, 128p, 180 color images and diagrams, index, order no. 1875.

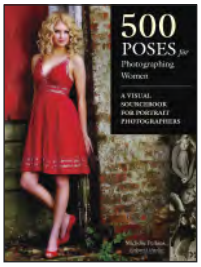


DOUG BOX'S

GUIDE TO POSING

FOR PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHERS

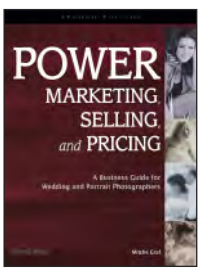
Based on Doug Box's popular workshops for professional photographers, this visually intensive book allows you to quickly master the skills needed to pose men, women, children, and groups. $34.95 list, 8.5x11, 128p, 200 color images, index, order no. 1878.



500 POSES FOR PHOTOGRAPHING WOMEN

Michelle Perkins

A vast assortment of inspiring images, from head-and-shoulders to full-length portraits, and classic to contemporary styles—perfect for when you need a little shot of inspiration to create a new pose. $34.95 list, 8.5x11, 128p, 500 color images, order no. 1879.



POWER MARKETING, SELLING, AND PRICING

A BUSINESS GUIDE FOR WEDDING AND PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHERS, 2ND ED.

Mitche Graf

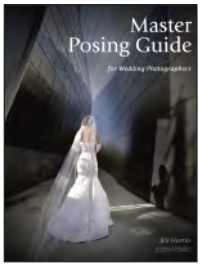
Master the skills you need to take control of your business, boost your bottom line, and build the life you want. $34.95 list, 8.5x11, 144p, 90 color images, index, order no. 1876.

MINIMALIST LIGHTING

PROFESSIONAL TECHNIQUES FOR STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHY

Kirk Tuck

Learn how technological advances have made it easy and inexpensive to set up your own studio for portrait photography, commercial photography, and more. $34.95 list, 8.5x11, 128p, 190 color images and diagrams, index, order no. 1880.



MASTER POSING GUIDE FOR WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHERS

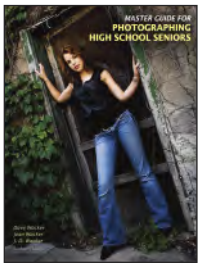
Bill Hurter

Learn a balanced approach to wedding posing and create images that make your clients look their very best while still reflecting the spontaneity and joy of the event. $34.95 list, 8.5x11, 128p, 180 color images and diagrams, index, order no. 1881.

ELLIE VAYO'S GUIDE TO

BOUDOIR PHOTOGRAPHY

Learn how to create flattering, sensual images that women will love as gifts for their significant others or keepsakes for themselves. Covers everything you need to know—from getting clients in the door, to running a succesful session, to making a big sale. $34.95 list, 8.5x11, 128p, 180 color images, index, order no. 1882.



MASTER GUIDE FOR

PHOTOGRAPHING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Dave, Jean, and J. D. Wacker

Learn how to stay at the top of the ever-changing senior portrait market with these techniques for success. $34.95 list, 8.5x11, 128p, 270 color images, index, order no. 1883.

PHOTOGRAPHING JEWISH WEDDINGS

Stan Turkel

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AVAILABLE LIGHT

PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES FOR USING EXISTING LIGHT SOURCES

Don Marr

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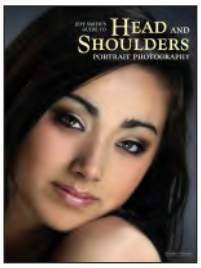

JEFF SMITH'S GUIDE TO

HEAD AND SHOULDERS PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY

Jeff Smith shows you how to make head and shoulders portraits a more creative and lucrative part of your business—whether in the studio or on location. $34.95 list, 8.5x11, 128p, 200 color images, index, order no. 1886.

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150 IDEAS FOR CUTTING COSTS AND BOOSTING PROFITS

Karen Dórame

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ON-CAMERA FLASH

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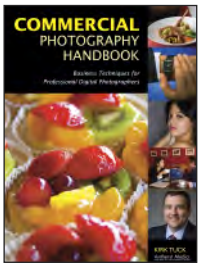
Billy Pegram

Learn how to light images that will get you—and your model—noticed. Pegram provides start-to-finish analysis of real-life sessions, showing you how to make the right decisions each step of the way. $34.95 list, 8.5x11, 128p, 150 color images, index, order no. 1889.



COMMERCIAL PHOTOGRAPHY HANDBOOK

BUSINESS TECHNIQUES FOR PROFESSIONAL DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHERS

Kirk Tuck

Learn how to identify, market to, and satisfy your target markets—and make important financial decisions to maximize profits. $34.95 list, 8.5x11, 128p, 110 color images, index, order no. 1890.

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Mark Chen

Master the skills you need to design wedding albums that will elevate your studio above the competition. $34.95 list, 8.5x11, 128p, 225 color images, index, order no. 1891.

GET ON THE PATH TO SUCCESS WITH REAL-WORLD TECHNIQUES FROM WORKING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Learning the art of photography is only the first step in building a successful career. To make a go at being a true professional photographer, you also need solid business skills. This book will help you overcome any bumps you encounter on your road to success, showing you what to expect, what *not* to expect, and how to make the smart decisions that will keep you moving toward your goals. Written in clear language you don't need to be a CPA to understand, it's an invaluable resource for photographers who would rather spend their time behind the camera than wading through spreadsheets!

FEATURES:

- Legally establishing your company
- Understanding and planning for sales, income, and employment taxes
- Controlling your expenses and setting prices
- Deciding between a home-based studio or one in a commercial space
- Selecting insurance to protect you and your business
- Customer service practices for satisfied clients
- Marketing techniques to get you started and keep you succeeding
- Working with employees and subcontractors
- Mastering the fine art of public relations
- Business insights from industry leaders like Kevin Kubota, Curt Littlecott, Allison Earnest, Kevin Elwell, and more

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